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WALSINGHAM.

VOL. II.

LONDON :
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WALSINGHAM,

THE GAMESTER.

BY CAPT. FREDERIC CHAMIER, R.N.

AUTHOR OF

“LIFE OF A SAILOR,” “BEN BRACE,” &c.

——“I have set my life upon a cast,
And I will stand the hazard of the die.”
SHAKSPEARE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1837.

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WALSINGHAM;

OR,

THE RUINED GAMESTER.

CHAPTER I.

It was an eventful day on which both couple were married. The bells rang their merry peal, the villagers crowded round the church—the day was beautiful, and the scene lively. The party had been augmented by Mr. and Mrs. Walton, who came to see their brother Charles made happy: but Douglass had not a relation on earth; he was now about to form a new connexion, and he certainly valued life the more since he had now some object to live for. The cottage was not far distant from the church, and the carriages made a very imposing line as they drove at a good pace to that porch

which now for the last time was destined to see Douglass pass under its cover.

Julia was extremely affected; but Margaret looked on with a stoical indifference which Stanhope dignified as courage. Some little time was lost in arranging the preliminary ceremonies; but before eleven o'clock Mr. Marshall had placed the party by the altar, and having looked round the church in order to enforce silence,—for the rustle of dresses and the shuffling of shoes would have rendered him almost inaudible,—he began.

By that altar stood Julia, now between sixteen and seventeen. Her face was partially shaded by the long Brussels veil; but her beautiful dark eye, her rosy lip, her pallid cheek, were perfectly visible. Her look was that of fervent devotion; and as the tear stole from her eyes and rapidly coursed down her face, the soft whisper of hope came to restore her to herself. Her mother's melancholy appearance contrasted sadly with that eye of expectant happiness.

But there was Margaret, robed in a splendid white satin dress, devoid of all ornaments but

one, which was a brooch of pearls, imitating lilies-of-the-valley, set in dead gold. A wreath of orange flowers encircled her head, over which was thrown a superb blond lace veil which nearly shaded her form ; her small and elegant feet peeped from below the glossy garb, and she looked the fairest form and loveliest face that human eye could behold. But her features were unmoved ; no tear at parting from her mother started on her marble countenance,—no flash of hope, no lightning of happiness illuminated her beautiful, her magnificent features ; even vanity did not seem gratified, or caused no sensation of apparent gratification : but, as motionless as a bride on canvass stood Margaret, and by her side was placed the man she had accepted as her husband.

The deep sonorous voice of Mr. Marshall as he read that impressive, that awful service, thrilled through Douglass. Julia's responses were almost inaudible, whilst Margaret's were firm and without the slightest trepidation. At last the word "amazement" announced the termination of the ceremony : they signed their

names ; and whilst Julia Anson was a straggle of indefinite lines, Margaret's was written in the same clear hand, with the usual boldness, that would have penned an invitation to dinner. Again the merry bells rang through the valley ; again the little boys and girls, all eager to see so fine a wedding, mingled their shrill voices in the loud hurrahs ; whilst the more respectable, at a farther distance, intruded not to stare the brides into confusion.

Gay was the breakfast which had been prepared in tents upon the small grassplat at the back of the cottage ; the brides retired to change their dresses, and by one o'clock Julia and Douglass were on the road to Longdale House. The last person with whom Douglass shook hands was Mr. Verity : he had been present at the marriage, and with the honesty of manner which he always wore, and wore as a right, he implored Douglass to treasure up with miserly care and attention the lovely little casket which was now his ; he spoke warmly of the joys, the real comforts of domestic life, whilst he slightly

alluded to the danger of fashion, the folly of extravagance.

In his usual gay manner, he said to Julia as they parted, "I have taken the liberty, my pretty bride, of giving your husband a little advice; and on your account I shall not charge him my usual fee, but, with your permission, I being the man who brought him the best tidings he ever received, and by which he is enabled to make you happy, will take more than the value from your lips:" and he kissed her and called her "his child."

They drove away. The idle curiosity of some of Douglass's old abusers was satisfied; for, unlike the generality of people, who pull down the blinds as if they were guilty of an act they were ashamed of, they posted merrily along as common travellers, having none of those signals of matrimony misnamed favours, and which only tend to make the people who are silly enough to carry this riding advertisement the show and the wonder of the neighbourhood.

At Longdale House was found every com-

fort which money could purchase. It was a singular fact, that Houghton had paid the most unremitting attention to the luxury of life at Longdale, when he never intended to reside there himself.

The newly-married couple became the lions of the place for the first month, and then sank down into their proper station. To Julia it was a scene of enchantment: young, ardent, loving and beloved, she felt the days of life roll rapidly away; her garden she attended herself, her favourite dogs and horses were caressed and watched, and in the delight of extending her charity to those around her, she won the golden opinions of her neighbours. Ah! why did not Douglass remain in this paradise?—why did he sigh to leave that which monarchs might have envied? It was no absolute solitude, no place built in a valley from which no other smoke was seen to curl above the many trees: but they were surrounded by a plentiful neighbourhood; they were within reach of a country town before ten minutes' moderate walking could have

tired them ; they had society if they wished it, they had solitude at their command.

Douglass might have had vices which were at this moment lulled to rest, but he had not ambition to rise, or rule a state : he considered those silent members who pay immensely for merely the name of being members of a House, and the privilege of franking letters, as so many vain-glorious people, who, having got within the threshold, are afraid to advance one step farther in the path they pant to pursue. Douglass had all he wanted, and yet there was a void in his heart. It was a natural restless disposition, which poverty had kept down in the village, but which now broke forth like half-smothered flame at the admission of air. But Julia was so happy in her abode, that, although a year had passed, she never expressed the smallest wish to move from her habitation. But Fate ruled them.

Douglass happened to have received a book of travels, which at that time and up to the present has held a considerable influence over the minds of Englishmen ; and it so occurred that

they both expressed a wish to move a little on the Continent, in order, as they smilingly said, to enhance the value of their own country, and their own home. Julia had been two months previous safely delivered of a boy, and the medical attendant recommended change of air when both mother and baby should become a little stronger. They therefore agreed to remain quiet at Longdale until the end of September, then cross over to Paris, and according to their feelings and disposition arrange their future movements. Such being the plan, they remained at home until the time proposed, when they put their scheme in practice, and early in October arrived at Boulogne.

Stanhope after his marriage took his beautiful statue to London; but receiving orders to join his regiment, quartered near Worcester, he retired to that dull town, and managed to get through life as most men do who have pretty wives and country quarters. As far as an honourable man blindly creating his wife into a goddess could be happy, Stanhope was so, and so remained for some years.

The morning of Douglass's departure from Longdale, he arose early, and taking his last walk round his domain, gave orders to his tenants, directing some few alterations to be made. In his return home, he found himself close to the grave of Benjamin Houghton. He paused as he read the epitaph he had himself penned. He felt an awful creeping of his flesh as he remembered his sad story; and, mutely gazing at the cenotaph, allowed his ideas to take a wide, unbounded range. He felt—and well he remembered it in after life—he felt a warning that his days of happiness were over, that no longer for him the sun of content was destined to shine, that hereafter he should be poor and miserable. He shook, or endeavoured to shake, from his mind the unwelcome presentiment: but it was useless—it clung to his very heart; and, as he turned to take his last farewell, he thought he heard a deep, deep sigh. Being one of those men not overtinged with superstition, he imagined that in reality some one might be near and in distress: he therefore returned, carefully examined the surround-

ing bushes, and then saying to himself that his ears had deceived him, he hastened from the spot, and began to urge the servants to the quicker discharge of their duty.

They soon started, and continued at that brisk pace which postboys in this blessed country accomplish when the wealthy travel and the pay is liberal. They at last came to a slower pace, and ultimately to a walk, as they ascended a rather steep hill. As Julia expressed a wish to walk, Douglass descended with her from the carriage, and they slowly mounted the road. On their right was a tent of gipsies, who, to judge from some few feathers near the hedge, had not gone supperless to bed. The fire of sticks and the suspended kettle announced the preparation of their breakfast; whilst an old brown woman peeped from beneath the tent and eyed the vehicle. A younger one now came forward to ask charity; and both Julia and Douglass recognised the pretty girl whose prophecy they had fulfilled. They soon brought to her recollection the cottage and their fortune, which she either remembered, or feign-

ed so well to do, that Douglass was convinced she knew them again.

“Let us see,” said Julia, “what our destiny may be. I declare,” she continued, “I have an implicit confidence in your foresight ; for you destined me to my husband, and here he is to answer for himself.”

Douglass felt extremely annoyed at this childish inclination of Julia’s ; but as she never expressed a wish he did not hasten to gratify, he gave his consent. But as the carriage had now topped the hill, he proposed that the old woman should tell his at the same moment that the young one should cross the palm of Julia, and thus afford some conversation in comparing their very different destinies as they journeyed to Dover.

Douglass was quite aware that Julia believed a little in the mysteries of these strange people ; and therefore, in order to secure a good fortune, he gave her half-a-crown, and offered the same himself to the old woman.

They stood apart. Julia’s ear was ready for the reception of any strange fortune ; whilst

Douglass, it must be confessed, foreboded something bad. The old woman, after crossing his hand with the silver and asking if he gave it with a free will, placed it in her snug pocket, and began to trace the lines of his hand: she looked steadfastly at them, then at his face; but Douglass interrupted her gaze by urging her to be quick, as their time was short.

“Ay, ay,” she began, “youth is ever impetuous: but this is no time for hurry. See here,” as she looked at the lines, “how plain the marks of misery and want are indented!” and she traced her dirty fingers over those lines which every man, woman, and child have upon both their hands, and which when you look at them form an M, and consequently when regarded by another who stands opposite, a W.

“It is rather odd,” Douglass remarked, “that your daughter never saw this when she predicted wealth, and love, and happiness, and every other blessing under the sun.”

“She only saw the present,” replied the old withered black-eyed hag; “I see the future:—

listen, and remember the lines of Margery Colston, for they shall be true, as that your wife was not your first love."

Struck rather by this truth, which Douglass might have known was a saying as old as the hills, he listened to the "creaking couplets" of this modern Sibyl, who, after clearing her croak, thus began:—

"Thy way through life is sadly crost—
A fortune won, a fortune lost !
Advice unheeded,—*man* beware
Of friendly smile and gambler's snare.
I see through shrouds of distant time
Long years of misery and crime ;
A barren branch of infamy !
This is the gipsy's prophecy !"

And before Douglass could bribe her to unsay her spell, she darted into her tent and threw herself on the ground. Douglass turned to his wife, and found her alone, and pale, and breathless.

"Good God ! Julia," he exclaimed ; "what ails you, my dear ?—you look frightened to death."

"And am," she replied. "I wish I never had heard the voice of that dingy girl ; for I

shall now from this moment feel the truth of her saying,—I shall be miserable by anticipation. Oh ! it cannot be ;—and how could this girl know beforehand what Fate may have decreed ?”

“Heed it not, my dearest Julia,” replied Douglass. “These women live upon the fears and hopes of the credulous ; and we have paid no very great compliment to our instructors in youth to have listened to the croakings of these hags. It is very obvious that it is only a shilling guess or a half-crown couplet, or they would know their own destiny, and avoid the gallows and the colonies a little oftener than they do.”

“It is very odd though, my dear Robert, how the strongest minds yield to a little superstition. Now, I would wager a trifle, that if your old woman told you something which corresponded with that the young one told me, although you would term it an odd *coincidence of circumstances*, yet you would feel rather uneasy that such odd coincidence did occur with such a precision.”

“Do you remember what she told you, my dear Julia?”

“Yes, that I do,” she replied; “and I wish I had never heard it.”

“Well, then,” resumed Douglass, “we will compare notes when we get in the carriage.” And after panting up the hill in silence and resuming their seats, Douglass wrote the gipsy’s verses in his pocket-book, in order to avoid the impending ruin directly he perceived the cloud gathering over him.

Julia did the same; and the former confessed himself rather startled when he read the “*odd coincidence*” the younger brownie had thus foretold; it seeming a rule amongst these people, that you have prose for your shilling, and poetry for your half-crown.

“Tho’ the days of your youth have with riches been crown’d,
Believe not those riches for ever shall last;
For the Fates on your infant malignantly frown’d,
And your evening of life is with sorrow o’ercast.
Not a branch from your loins shall enliven your age;
Cold, cold is the grave on a far foreign shore!
Beware of this warning from Margery’s page,—
You shall live to *despise* what you *now* most adore.”

“That last line has a clear reference to me,”

said Douglass, "and by way of blotting out the dark hint, I'll kiss away the only tear I yet have seen on Julia's glowing cheek. Come, my little timid dear," he said as he took her clammy hand, "think less of the future, and more of the present. Poor little Houghton has, I dare say, like most of us, misery enough in this world without a gipsy's nonsense to make it worse; and we are Christians enough to bow to a decree we cannot avert, come when and how it will."

"Do not, Douglass, I beseech you, speak in that fearful way! You do not think the child will die?"

"Not a moment the sooner for the wisdom of Margery Colston, be assured," he replied. "I spoke in the manner I did because I saw you droop over the doggrel of young Margery. These women think it right to give you something for your money; and so for a crown, like many a prince, we have lost happiness."

"Only for a moment, my dear Robert. But it is an odd coincidence," she added with a smile.

Now, *it is an odd thing* how men seek to find out misery: and what is still more strange is this,—that those very people who by their religion are predestinarians are always the most superstitious; and yet when it comes to a business of the scimitar or the bow-string, they quietly place it all to the account of Takdeer (destiny), and walk with as much composure to their death as a skilful surgeon does to an operation. We are all of us a pack of contradictions tied up by the thread of existence; and as fast as one contradiction is confuted by Death, up jumps a young controversy, which soon supplies the place of the contradiction: and so we go on wrangling and fighting, making war and signing peace, until the old undertaker and the sexton finish the business which the doctor has left unfinished, and “Good night, Marmion.”

When a man runs his eye over history, he sees in every age, in every clime, just the same ambition, just the same idea of politics and policy, which the author of “Devereux” thus defines: “The first is wisdom for one’s country; the second, wisdom for one’s self.” The wheel

of Time rolls on, generation succeeds generation as wave succeeds wave : the same stimulus still excites, the same butterfly propensities to flutter in the sunshine of court favour ; the same readiness, and generally oftener done, to kneel to a king than bow the knee to a God. On the other side, chimney-sweeper succeeds chimney-sweeper ; the beggar of one generation leaves the crossing and the broom to the next generation ; the seven small children of misery, who have been let out at sixpence a day to a would-be mother of a large family, with the privilege of being pinched to excite compassion, for an extra sixpence a week, grow up, become mothers, let out their offspring for the same laudable purpose ; and professions, like religion, depend upon the custom of the parents. The son of a play-actor is generally a Thespian ranter ; the daughters of the profligate are generally found in the streets pursuing the parental example ; the clerk of the Treasury gets his son in the same office ; the soldier places his first-born in the army ; the sailor cradles his infant in a ship ; and the lawyer feels a glow

of satisfaction when he hears his son arguing in a bad cause.

Such, then, is life : the wisest is the man who turns it most to his own comfort without being dependant on another. We are like the travelling carriage,—sometimes going merrily along the road, sometimes suddenly upset when least expected, sometimes toiling up a hill and sometimes dashing down it.

Douglass wished he had kept his philosophy a little more in view, and had guarded in his heart a little more cautiously the advice of old Houghton. He would not have left Dover the day after his arrival, to go over that miserable road of the Great Nation, which, like ambition, shows many an uneven step to be overcome before the traveller arrives at the wished-for goal.

CHAPTER II.

“Now,” thought Douglass as he looked round the splendid rooms at the Hôtel des Princes in the Rue Richelieu,—“Now am I in the very house where young Houghton first took his wife when he left his good old father never to see him again : and I came here in order that his example might be a warning to me, that if I indulged in the same freaks, the consequences, the calamities which befell him might awe me into reason.”

“Well, Julia, my love, after all our fatigue over that abominable road which the Great Nation—many blessings on their fertile inventions—have constructed for the ruin of one’s carriage and one’s temper, what think you of this Paris, so famed for its climate, its wits, and its gaiety?”

“Why, thank Heaven! I cannot answer one of your questions. Of the climate I am no judge, since we only arrived yesterday; of wit I cannot give an opinion; and as for gaiety, the only thing to make me laugh has been a monkey riding on a poodle, dressed in the uniform of King Charles the Tenth’s guard, and so like his keeper as to be taken for his son. But if I were to judge from first sight, I certainly should not think these dirty streets, these noisy vehicles—for they make more riot than waggons in England, and these eternal drums, at all likely to captivate me.”

“They profess to be a military nation, and therefore they must have the outward symbols.”

“As long, Robert, as they don’t *clash* their *cymbals*, I care very little for their parade or their dress.”

“You see, Julia, the air has infected you a little: you never made a pun in England. When you have got all your domestic arrangements made, we will walk over the Louvre, the sight most worth seeing in this city, and which will be a monument of the taste and genius

of Napoleon as long as Paris exists amongst the cities of the earth. But look to little Robert, for his life is in danger if you believe Margery's prediction; and that will have one good effect, it will make us more watchful over his safety and his health."

"No mother," said Julia, "requires the stimulus of a gipsy's prophecy to guard her child in sickness or in health. Before I thought of the minor comforts of myself, I had seen little Robert asleep in his grand bed, and had given every order likely to conduce to his comfort. That done, I do own that after my fatigues are forgotten, I shall have no objection to seeing the strange sights of this far-famed Paris, of dining at a restaurateur's, and of witnessing the antics of the dancers on the boards of their own theatre."

To the inclinations of his dear little wife Douglass lent a ready ear. Time had not chilled his affection; and he verily believed at that moment that the little Houghton—that link in the chain of human happiness—had bound him closer and closer to Julia. He loved

her tenderly, dearly ; for she, whatever in her gay moments she might have said, looked at him as her husband, her protector, her friend. To her wish, then, in behalf of sight-seeing, Douglass speedily agreed, and they commenced their operations both far and near. Versailles, that work of royal imagination,—St.Cloud,—in short, the whole of the royal palaces were visited ; they rummaged the guide-book for days of amusement, whilst the evenings were spent at the different theatres in raptures with this gay and lively people. In this manner a month soon elapsed : still had Paris sufficient charms to attract them ; and, finding the place so agreeable, they resolved to winter there, and leave the Italian tour until the spring of next year.

Oh, cursed resolution!—doubly, trebly cursed ; —from that resolution sprang days of unhappiness, nights of wretchedness. To that fatal resolution Douglass was indebted for all the misery of his future situation—all his lost comforts—all, all that contributed to adorn the road of life, and make its traveller journey in ease and contentment. If ever predestination

was the creed of a Mahomedan, that creed had fixed itself upon Douglass in looking back through the clouds of life which had darkened over his growing age : it seems as if the hand of Fate had guided him by the prophecy of the gipsy. Vain now are all speculations as to how the evil could have been avoided ; equally vain is it to recall all those little warnings which tapped so lightly at the door of caution, and warned him of the bitter fruit he was about to gather.

They had now exhausted Paris, and had partially retired to the domestic felicity they enjoyed at Longdale, occasionally varying the scene by frequenting the opera, to which Julia had become very partial ; and at this time they had not increased their acquaintance, not even by one name. They knew no one ; they were regarded as people of large fortune but reserved habits. Frequent attempts had been made by the eager solicitors of English society or French adventurers ; but all had been steadily refused. They were happy in themselves ; they wanted no external light to flare upon their social

board, and they resolutely denied all intruders upon their acquaintance. It is now that we purpose making a few remarks upon the impoverished state of the French nobility, and in the picture of this fallen grandeur show the blessings which arise from the law of primogeniture.

In this country, hundreds who are unhappily younger sons lift up their angry voices against the palpable injustice of one monopolising that which ought by the laws of affection to be equally divided amongst the whole. The reformers of this supposed abuse urge, as a reason, the envy, hatred, and malice with which one brother is likely to view the other, and thus occasion those family jars which, whilst in the higher sphere of life they disturb the domestic economy, may also breed considerable intestine commotions in the economy of the state. All the objections which the ingenuity of younger sons have suggested would be removed by asking them to reside in Paris and become acquainted with its society ; and it will require no letters of introduction to the noblemen by birth of that great nation.

How is it possible that the high character and station of the nobleman can be sustained after a large fortune has been subdivided between eight children, and again that subdivision to take place with eight more children? What then (leaving out the widow's allowance) will be the income of the head of the family?

Who, if imprudence should have impoverished a younger brother, who is to relieve him?—where is the younger child to look for support?—to be pushed forward to serve a state although possessing the best of talents: for we all know that many a man pines in want who has more abilities than half the chancellors of exchequer that ever managed the finance of a great country; and many a poor obscure person would be better able to conduct the foreign diplomacy, and write half the communications in the language of the different countries, than some foreign secretaries of state: but how is he to be known—how is he to be pushed forward—how is he to find an opportunity of distinguishing himself?—his elder brother has no more influence than himself; it is not his own sphere

which will exalt him—no, no, envy would guard against that. We do not see the shopkeepers of that most quiet parish of Marylebone suggesting one of their own class for their representative—not they. We are all remarkably fond of liberty; but we take most especial care that the liberty shall not exalt our equal over ourselves.

But when the elder son succeeds to the honours and the fortunes of his father—when the estate, instead of being rooted from the family, is still upheld as an asylum for all—when the power given by the aristocracy of wealth gives also power in the state,—the younger sons educated at our first colleges, with minds cultivated, honour founded, have an advocate, and a strong one, in their elder brother; and if they follow the profession of the sword, or unravel the mysteries of law or of religion, they do not work without a prospect of reward; and they know that they have one to ask for them, and one who by the support he yields to the state has a right to ask, that they may receive the merited promotion.

When a man, humble in birth, but brilliant

in talents, thrusts himself by the energies of his mind a little above the level of his associates, who have we found the first to make him useful to the state but the nobleman of fortune? It would be easy to mention many at this moment who owe their advancement entirely to the power of money in the hands of an elder son. The contrast between France and England is thus drawn, because many believe that the picture of the former is caricatured. It is a nation brave and generous, but falling fast into the republican upas which will blast all around it.

Douglass thought, and the best of us will think, that he might without much hazard to himself venture into some of the sinks of iniquity so famous in Paris, and to which he was indebted for the fortune he possessed—thus causing, as he thought, at any rate some good out of evil. No man had fortified himself more against the dangers of gaming—at least, if reflection is a safeguard—than he had done. Frequently in his dreams, when his fancy revisited the tomb of old Houghton, and as he

rambled over the beautiful grounds of Longdale, or when imagination recalled the scene in the pew, the cottage-gate, the gipsy, his own former abode, and his early propensities, even in his sleep he made vows to abjure that hated salon ; to conquer the most latent disposition (which once occupied his mind) of play ; to allow curiosity to go unsatisfied in regard to Frascati's and the Palais Royal : and when he awoke, he prayed with a fervency unknown to him during his comparative poverty, that he might profit by the example of others, and not, like the generality of fools, pay for the experience of which others had written and published.

They were in the Hotel des Princes, in the Rue Richelieu, as before mentioned, and they occupied those splendid apartments which a few years previous formed the residence of Prince Leopold, now a *king*.

It was one of those peculiar Parisian days when the mud makes very considerable advances towards the sides of the street as a fiacre splashes through the gutter in the centre.

that he stood gaping out of his window, when the servant, who was one of the waiters, came to remove the breakfast apparatus. Julia had retired to play with little Houghton ; and Douglass, being seized with a fit of blue devils, had recourse to conversation with the servant to dissipate the gloom of his feelings. Nothing is so difficult in poetry or conversation as the beginning—without indeed it be the end ; and thus, merely for the sake of breaking the ice of reserve, he asked the waiter, who resided in the large house exactly in front of his window ; “ for,” said he, continuing, “ I see a vast number of people eternally going in and out of an evening, and I remark it is always lit up in a superior manner.”

“ Cela, monsieur,” replied the waiter ; “ c’est le Salon des Etrangers.”

Douglass started as if struck by lightning. “ The Salon des Etrangers !” he ejaculated ; “ I thought that place had been on the other side of the Boulevards : surely it did stand there ?”

“ It did,” replied the garçon ; “ but now it is held there. It is a kind of club where mes-

sieurs occasionally play," continued the talkative fellow, as he piled saucers, cups, plates, everything, into one tray ; and spreading the fingers of his left hand, and holding the arm in a bent position, balancing the utensils with the most unwavering exactness, he added as he retreated, "and many of your countrymen know it."

"May Satan blister his blabbing tongue !" thought Douglass, for he was already miserable : a curiosity uncontrollable crept over him to see the interior of a place so celebrated. He did not dare mention it to Julia : bred up as she had been in domestic seclusion, she had learned to couple the words gamesters and swindlers, and believed that one was inseparable from the other. "The man," she once said, "who sits down to win from his friend cannot be actuated by honourable feelings, for no sooner will fortune favour him than he will exult over the loss of his friend ; this is ungenerous, it leads to recrimination—recrimination leads to angry words—angry words create enemies ; one likes to conquer or ruin an enemy, and we are not over-scrupulous how we succeed as long as we

do succeed, and thus revenge is not unfrequently the herald of dishonesty."

Douglass looked at that cursed house for more than half the day: he felt his curiosity overcoming his resolution; he brought to the aid of the former "example"—the determination not to play one farthing—the necessity of travellers seeing strange sights—the weakness it betrayed in shunning rather than facing an evil; and he backed it all up by saying, "Why, if I do as the sailors did, treat resolution to a glass, I see no reason why I should play; or if I did, why I should lose."

On the other side, he saw Harry Houghton's ghost pointing to his pistols—his victim under the lamp in Curzon-street—his miserable old father—and lastly, that tomb, and the last counsel concerning it, as plain as the writing on the wall at Belshazzar's feast. The reader will here see the truth as applied to gamesters and women—"If either consider or entertain the least parlance with curiosity, they are lost!" Douglass felt his courage gradually yielding: he made a desperate sortie to recover the for-

tune of the day ; the enemy beat him back, followed him over the drawbridge, overcame the last of his soldiers, and before four o'clock he was conquered and had resolved to visit this place. This was the first step of his downfall ; and as Napoleon told Talleyrand when that minister made the same remark when the emperor sent his army to Spain, " Then take care I don't kick you down the rest," so might Douglass have heard the voice of triumphant curiosity threatening him with the same disgraceful exit.

Now came the first falsehood to be told to Julia. At this Robert shuddered ; for he knew that

" Beauty, like supreme dominion,
Is best supported by opinion ;"

and that directly the first breach of confidence was discovered, Julia's good opinion of him would be shaken, and he from the knowledge of the error would lose his " lawful and right supremacy." Many—ah ! many, will say, " Why, with your eyes open, for the sake of an idle curiosity, run the risk of being made supremely miserable by anxiety ? or why break down the barrier of

domestic happiness which your honour—your affection had upreared. The answer is with the poet :

“ Fate steals along with silent tread,
Found often’st in what least we dread :
An earthquake may be bid to spare
The man who ’s strangled by a hair.”

It was his destiny : it was a part of the trial he was to experience in life.

It happened, however, that for the present he had no need to add falsehood to his folly. His child, now about six months old, was seized by one of the many maladies to which children are subject ; and Julia, whose maternal anxiety was excessive, slept in the room they had appropriated for a nursery. Douglass therefore kept his own counsel ; and when Julia had retired to rest, and had, with her usual sincerity of affection, implanted on his lips a kiss as she murmured a tender “ Good night,” he took his hat, and, with a throbbing heart and fearful foreboding, crossed the street and stood at the entrance of the salon.

It happened that a great political excitement

took place that day in Paris ; and as he arrived at the circular staircase, a knot of Englishmen were busy in discussing the probable termination of these growing disturbances. Douglass joined in the conversation ; and after giving his opinion and listening to that of others—by which latter means more friends are made than by the former,—one of the number said, “ Well, we may as well discuss the matter in doors as out : let us go in.” Douglass, to whom the remark was made, observed that he was not a member : upon which one of the number, an apparently young man of perfect suavity of manners, and one who seemed to know more of France and Frenchmen than the talented author of “ France and the French,” volunteered his services in the way of an introduction ; and Douglass followed his footsteps, and obeying the injunctions painted on the right-hand side of the entrance—“ *Essayez bien vos pieds, S. V. P.* ”—he entered this superior pandemonium.

In the ante-chamber was a table, round which were assembled five or six servants of the establishment. The kind *friend* nodded and

pointed to Douglass ; the servants took his cloak and hat ; and when the folding-doors were opened, he made his appearance in this gorgeous hell, quite astonished at its comforts and its company.

This room was well lighted up ; the various papers of Paris and of London were strewed upon the table,—a large fire enlivened the apartment, opposite to which was a sofa, on which reclined a venerable man decorated with a star, and who seemed far from the scene of dissipation and of ruin, if one might judge from the smile which played upon his lips. The room at one end was supported by two pillars, near which, and in the left-hand corner, was a tea-table : a servant attended, dressed in the livery of the establishment, to supply the different gentlemen. At the end opposite to the door was a window which, when opened, led to a terrace, terminating in a long garden lately much reduced, as the ground has been turned to a more profitable use by letting it out on a building-lease. The ceiling of this first room was exquisitely painted, and Venus rising from

the Ocean formed the subject on which a celebrated artist had used his utmost talent.

In the Salon, unlike any other gaming establishment, there are commissioners in the persons of French noblemen, who receive the company ; and to the reigning king Douglass was now introduced. He was rather a short, thin elderly gentleman, who spoke English well and fluently, but with a strong accent : his manner was kind and amiable ; he was obliging, civil, courteous ; and, strange as it may appear to Englishmen, the situation is not considered derogatory to the aristocracy of France, or the epaulettes of a general.

There is a charm about that person's manner, an elegance about his conversation, a superiority in his attainments, that his worst enemy could not traduce : he is, in fact, a thorough gentleman. Robert Douglass's name was written down in a book, with his residence : he was informed that he was now a member of the Cercle ; and he was given to understand that he would shortly be invited to share the hospitality of the establishment.

The gentleman hinted to him the danger of gaming, for he was far above the villany of enticing the unwary to venture into the deep and dangerous whirlpool of play ; he warned him to avoid the lure rather than to court it ; and he left him with the impression on his mind that he was a great deal too good for his situation.

It was whilst Douglass wandered into the various topics of the day, that he heard the first rattle of the dice, and saw those who had been idling their time over a newspaper drop the common excitement to rush to that of a far greater, and of a far more ruinous nature. He was not slow to follow, and soon found himself by a round table in the centre of a circular room. Between the many pillars which surrounded this apartment were settees, the backs resting against looking-glasses ; whilst the decorative part, being white and gold, gave a cheerful appearance, which otherwise would have been dimmed by the green shade which covered the suspended lamp over the table. But the wood fire alone—the crackling of the

wood—the brightness of the blaze, contributed to enliven the dreary silence of expectant success.

On the mantelpiece was that common ornament a clock, the device of which was ill suited to the apartment ; it was Cupid and Psyche in amorous dalliance, dawdling with Time ; and that clock might have told its gazers of hours mispent, of moments of excitement ruinous to health, to comfort, to honour. Douglass looked at that monitor of life, and moralised over the scene before him : he regretted that the young could be enticed to forego the nobler ambition of man for the minor gratification of gain ; for, after all, gaming is but a desire of gain by the distress of another : it is the purchase of anxiety at an enormous rate and ruinous price ;—it is the solace of the idle, the resort of the frivolous ;—it is, in its first stage, the innocent harmless fly in the strong web of the many-eyed spider : it begins with a flutter, and it ends with death.

Douglass passed to the next room. A long table ran from end to end : this was the rouge-

et-noir table. Here he remarked the pale and the wan of countenance busily employed in endeavouring to thwart the decree or the whim of Fortune by marking with a pin on a card the result of each deal, as if calculation could overcome chance ! There, deal after deal, would the half-ruined man mark with scrupulous care the winning colour ; whilst ever and anon he counted his money, running the Napoleons from hand to hand by threes or fives—then placing them in different heaps, in fantastic crosses,—for gamblers are always superstitious ; then changing the seat, turning the chair round, and a thousand other imbecile peculiarities which are only to be seen when the mind is paralysed, and the weakness of intellect has given way to the uncertainty of hope.

The living picture before him might have scared Douglass from the talons of these birds of avarice and of prey. He might have seen in the sunken eye—the premature age—the quivering lip—the angry glance—the distorted countenance, — that if gaming was happiness,

it varied its hues and shapes from those of pleasure and enjoyment.

He returned half sick with disgust to the hazard-table, and looked long and long at the change of fortune. He saw the timid man, when the stream of the goddess flowed favourably, availing himself but cautiously of her goodness. She had too often deceived him ; but had he then doubled and trebled his stake, large would have been the profit. But no sooner had the slighted deity perceived the coldness of her votary, than the tide was turned, and the inexperienced youth, attempting to stem the stream of adversity, lost his all by daringly opposing it. Then came cursings and execrations, not loud, but deep ;—then came the involuntary motion of the hand—the ineffectual search for more—the hasty look as if to brave the eye it hardly dared to meet. Fearful—fearful sight ! too well remembered, although too slightly, was the impression made upon his heart.

When Douglass looked at the clock, he found he had already wasted two hours : it was past

one o'clock, and he thought of his home and his happiness. The gentleman who introduced him, and whose name was Walsingham, now joined him : he had been successful; the glittering heap of gold, the numerous bank-notes, the counters of various shapes and worth, he placed upon the mantel-piece, and he rubbed his hands with a pleasure almost incredible when he enumerated the gross gainings of about 17,000 francs,—an insignificant sum, and only rendered of greater value when won at play.

Douglass remarked to him his astonishment at the splendour of the establishment, and the apparent order and fairness by which it was conducted. There was a keen glance—a searching look, as much as to express his doubt if Douglass were in jest or in earnest; when, in rather an abrupt manner, he said,

“ This, I fancy, is your first visit here: I recommend you to make it your last.”

Douglass felt rather pleased than annoyed at the blunt familiarity of his new acquaintance, who now, as he had won, looked not more than thirty : although his face was furrowed and his

eye sunken, yet still the freshness of manhood was upon him, and neither age nor excitement had blanched his hair.

“Your recommendation is good,” replied Douglass, “but rather at variance with your practice.”

“Yes,” said Walsingham rather quickly; “I understand you:—a kind of sign-post which points, but does not follow the way; a kind of pilot who bawls out ‘Yonder is the beacon,’ and *runs upon the bank.*”

Douglass smiled at the pun, and asked him “why he continued a course he recommended others not to steer.”

“Why,” replied Walsingham, “I was a happy man until I became a victim and got tied to a *stake*, and am now quietly anticipating my execution. I am the best man in the world to give advice, for I have profited by experience. But I give you this hint,—that if you want to be asked to dinner here, you must dabble a little with a few golden fish: they are baits which are always taken, and the fisherman not unfrequently hooked.”

“I think,” replied Douglass, “that to see the whole lure that is offered to the gudgeons who are ultimately treated like the fish, only that it is a pocket exenteration instead of a human one, even I must break through my vow and play a little: but it is many years since I played the game, and must trust to their honour, for it seems conducted with great propriety.”

“Oh yes,” replied Mr. Walsingham, “with a vast deal of *propriety*,” giving an extra force to the word.

“I mean to say,” continued Douglass, “with a vast deal of fairness,—that is, no cheating is allowed.”

“Ah,” replied Walsingham; “that very much depends upon the stake that is down. It is quite wonderful with what extra rapidity that pale-faced croupier sitting in state at the rouge-et-noir table counts when there are a few billets de-banque upon the table. But, God knows, I would not imply any unfairness.”

“Oh, certainly not,” responded Douglass; “only you think it would be just as well to count the cards yourself.”

“Just so ; merely as a precaution it is not bad policy to count money after your father,” continued Walsingham ; “for when you have paid as much for your experience as I have, you will learn to estimate the honesty of human nature at precisely what it is worth. Does not the very decoration of this establishment convince you that much must be won to support it? and if the game was perfectly even—that is, as regards its chances—and that fair play was always observed, do you think Fortune would always roll her wheel in one direction, making the visitors as a kind of cornucopia from the contents of which the proprietor and monopoliser of gaming is to be enriched? I have introduced you here, and I am sorry for it, for you are just as likely to be ruined as any man I know. I see you possess *curiosity* : it may be a ‘strong sign of a vigorous intellect,’ but I do not know a more dangerous associate either in the streets or houses of Paris.”

“Well, then,” said Douglass, “I am resolved to see all I can of this pandemonium ; and by way of beginning, I will just try my luck at this hazard for a few Napoleons. I care not if I

win, and it cannot hurt me if I lose; so I wish you good night and a repetition of your good fortune. As for myself, I do not intend to *play* — only to dabble, as you call it; for I am boy enough to wish my curiosity satisfied for more reasons than one.” And again repeating the “Good night,” Douglass sat down at the table and was soon in the very whirlpool he had promised to shun.

CHAPTER III.

DOUGLASS awoke pale and fatigued : he had hardly been in bed four hours, and his slumbers were disturbed by awful dreams and uncomfortable apprehensions. Strange is the first feeling of the excitement in a gamester's mind ; strange the overpowering weight which presses down reason, which paralyses all exertion, which leaves but one wish, chills affection, and blights love. Douglass felt like a guilty criminal about to be placed at the bar when he heard his wife's hand upon the door. She came laughing with joy that her child was better, she threw her arms round him and she kissed him with her usual fondness ; but she was not slow to imagine that the return was not made with its usual affection. Women are quick at this discovery ; where men would never find the difference, the other sex are trem-

blingly alive to the slightest variation : with women, love is the very foundation of all thought, all desire ; with men, love is second to ambition, and not capable of competition with gaming.

“ My dearest Robert,” she began, “ you look ill to-day, as if you had not slept, and your air is distracted. Tell me, I pray, what has disturbed your quiet. And now you look,” she continued, smiling, “ like one who has been guilty of a bad action and afraid to confess it.”

“ I did not,” replied Douglass, “ sleep well last night, and I was annoyed about poor little Houghton, who, I thought, looked very ill indeed. The fact is, I reproached myself for not having sent for the doctor ; for well I know that children, although sometimes mightily tenacious of life, at other times are extinguished by the breath which would blow out a candle.”

“ Oh, dearest !” replied that affectionate creature, “ rest assured that I shall be the first to be alarmed for Houghton : I, his mother and his nurse, must first experience the poor little creature’s want of appetite ; and the pain that it would occasion me would remind me of the

cause, even if a mother's eyes could be closed against her child's appearance."

They sat down to breakfast; and again the vigilant attention of Julia startled Douglass.

"Why, Robert, you can neither eat nor talk to-day:—what is the matter with you?"

"Nothing, my dear; only I do not feel much inclined to eat. I feel—"

"Ill, Robert? Surely those sheets could not have been damp? By the bye, I thought I heard you moving during the night,—that is, about three this morning. Were you up then?"

"I do not remember," said Douglass (and he felt the equivocation), "getting out of bed at that hour."

"You answer me strangely, my dear Robert. Surely you did not go out after I left you last night?"

"Certainly not," replied Douglass; and he felt at the instant as if the chord which bound him in beautiful harmony to Julia snapped with a discordant sound, and was ruined for ever.

"Perhaps, after all," said Julia, "it is merely a French cold, or French diet, and I know you

lords of the creation cannot bear to be teased about your health. But you know, Robert," and she placed her dear little hand upon his,—“ you know I am a privileged person, and if I think proper I shall send for the doctor to feel your pulse. As I live,” said the dearest creature that ever breathed, “it riots like one under a strong excitement: and yet you *look* calm and easy, although pale and fatigued. Why, Robert, your pulse is just what I should imagine from your description to belong to a gamester or a drunkard !”

That blow struck home ; Douglass writhed as he felt the words penetrate to his heart ; a cold icy tremor shot through all his veins, and his lips blanched under the influence of the creeping venom ; nor could resolution or sudden effrontery course back the blood to the cheeks it had deserted — to the lips it had forsaken. Julia saw it—her quick eyes perceived it ; but she was too young to discriminate between anger and guilt. Afraid that she had provoked him by the remark, she threw herself round his neck, and asking a million of pardons, embraced

him long and tenderly. She implored him to send for the doctor, she rubbed his forehead, she chafed his temples, she urged him to recline upon the sofa and to amuse himself by some trivial reading whilst she would prepare some cool draught.

“What!” murmured Douglass to himself; “of what use can a doctor be to me, without I administer to myself? Macbeth’s physician could not cure me; for in a mind diseased the patient must be his own physician, and much I fear the struggle is beyond my effort.”

It is in vain to attempt a delineation of Douglass’s mind in order to show the overwhelming influence of gaming. He felt inclined, even with the remembrance of Harry vividly before him, to quarrel with her he best loved, the only woman he ever really loved,—he thought of boldly confessing, (confession, indeed, to a woman!) of declaring his time his own, his money his own, and his determination no longer to submit to a surveillance so disgustingly prying. Then came the shame of detection in the falsehood he had uttered when he de-

clared he had not left the house, when his own servant could best bear witness against him. There again he felt cruelly degraded :—men servants chatter in the halls and in the kitchens ; women's ears are quick, and tongues are noisy ; if Julia should, her suspicions being excited, inquire and be convinced that he had not returned until three o'clock in the morning, who could say that jealousy would not overcome discretion ? Douglass knew no one in Paris, *that* she knew. The theatres, the operas, all places of amusement are closed at midnight ; then those whose daily avocations engender labour, sleep, or seek it ; the honest artificer has closed his shop, the gay bustle of the light has been succeeded by the dull quiet of the darkness, and only the drowsy debauchee, the tired prostitute, or the jaded patrol, disturb the streets ; one place still glares with light, still has vigilant inmates,—still re-echoes the curses of the unfortunate, the noise of the dice, the ringing of gold, and there—*there* was Douglass, and now he felt himself the coward who dared not own

it,—the liar, the self-convicting liar, who had denied it.

It is but one short step to cross the Rubicon—he had done it. Henceforth for him was the conscientious applause of a calm conscience?—impossible ! He had degraded the mind he formerly sought to elevate ; he thought himself despised—he felt he deserved it. Oh, how fervently did he wish for some Houri to wring from his heart the black drop which envenomed the whole circulation ! what would he not have given to have recalled the last twenty-four hours of his miserable existence ! He struggled to overcome the feeling : he felt himself the more and more entangled in the mesh, and like the fool, afraid of retracing the step because his shadow was behind him, he rushed forward to sure darkness, wherein he should be divested of the troublesome companion.

He lay down, and held a book in his hand : it was “ St. Leon.” He opened it at the very part where, by his imprudence, his wife and family are ruined,—and how ? — by gaming !

He shut his mind from the wholesome lesson ; he felt too wise to need the advice : he turned towards the close of the volume,—he found St. Leon possessed of wealth, and he thought the philosopher's stone was a pair of dice. His eyes ran over the words ; but they never were conveyed to his mind, and he felt much like some of those sanctified hypocrites who, whilst murmuring a prayer, are thinking of a ball or a bonnet ; or like the boy condemned to read a certain number of pages, and who, whilst traversing the print, is either playing at peg-top, or prisoners' base.

Julia had returned, and Douglass had mastered his feelings ; his temper, which had been ruffled in the morning, had now recovered its partial smoothness, and he answered so well, and spoke so like himself, that she returned to the baby, and left him a consummate hypocrite. He had not long pondered over his own abasement, before his servant announced Mr. Walsingham ; and that intruding gentleman seemed to follow the air which conveyed his own name. Douglass welcomed him, but felt

the necessity of at once making him a partner in his falsehood; and no sooner had the servant closed the door, than he told him that he must present him as an old schoolfellow, and that he was on no account to mention where he had met him; on the contrary, he was to have seen him yesterday entering the hotel, to have inquired his name, and to have, for the good feeling of early friendship, eagerly paid him the first visit.

This is the sad effect of one falsehood, that it must be supported by a hundred—that the memory must be true to its master, or the whole will be discovered;—in short, the man who is guilty of this moral wrong at once strengthens the arms of his enemies, whilst he weakens his own.

“I hear,” said Walsingham, “that they used you roughly for your first imprudence last night, and that the bank, previously losers, left off gainers from your tide of misfortune. I hope the amount, like a man’s fortune or a woman’s beauty, is rather exaggerated.”

“I do not know,” replied Douglass, “what

report may have circulated, but I lost sixty-five thousand francs. It is paying sharply for amusement and experience, and perhaps for an invitation !”

“Right,” replied Walsingham ; “ here is one, which they asked me to bring to your hotel ; and as I shall be there, I shall be happy to show you the lions : it really is worth seeing, and I recommend you to accept it. You see what is added in the postscript. “ *Vous êtes prié de renvoyer au plus tard l’avant-veille le billet d’invitation, en cas d’empêchement.*”

“ I shall go,” replied Douglass : “ but you must do me the favour to ask me to dinner with *you*,” he said, putting the note into the fire ; “ for I have promised not to dine *there*, and I should not like to make an unquiet house for the gratification of my puerile curiosity. When my wife comes, do you ask me.”

At this moment Julia entered the room, and was introduced to Walsingham as an old schoolfellow of her husband’s, who had paid that compliment to his appearance, that al-

though they had separated some sixteen years, yet that time had used him so well, that he had retained the same face by which he had recognised him yesterday.

Walsingham bowed gracefully, and, taking up the hint and the conversation, paid a handsome compliment to Julia, by adding, that those who were happy always looked young ; in short, that the happiness of her countenance seemed reflected upon her husband.

“Time must have used him well, Mr. Walsingham,” said Julia, “to have so little altered the general character of his countenance, that you can distinguish the likeness after so many years’ absence. Pray what school were you at together ?”

Walsingham seemed an adept at lying—he was ready to pawn his soul for a third person ; he answered off-hand, “At Winchester.”

“Why, Robert,” remarked Julia, “I never heard you say that Winchester was one of your schools.”

“Yes, my dear, you remember,” he mentioned, “that I was removed from Twyford,

which is its preparatory school, when I was about seven years old. But, Mr. Walsingham," continued Douglass, "have you been long in Paris?"

"Not very long, — that is, a year or so," replied the quondam friend, apparently embarrassed. "But I know few, very few people here; and as I have at last fallen upon one of my friends whom Time has separated from me, allow me to make amends for the old tyrant, and beg you to give me the pleasure of your company at dinner to-morrow."

Douglass looked at Julia; she seemed to nod assent. He accepted the invitation; and Walsingham, after promising to call for him at a quarter to six, in order to conduct him to the café where he was to give his dinner, was about to depart, when Julia interposed, and said, "My dear Robert, how much better would it be if Mr. Walsingham were to dine with us. I should then hear the old school-stories; and you, who look anything but well, would be under my guardian care. Besides, I

want to pay Mr. Walsingham some attention for his compliment to your youth."

"I really am highly flattered, madam," replied Walsingham; "but I have engaged four or five persons to dine with me, and I cannot put them off, and therefore the pleasure you propose must be deferred until another day. The change will be beneficial to your husband; and you may rely upon my only obliging him to taste one or two wines, and eat the best cookery at the Rocher."

"What a precious villain I am already!" said Douglass, musing to himself: "by heavens! I feel the folds of the snake getting closer and closer around me, and yet have neither spirit nor resolution to either fly or face the danger. Here I am floundering in lies, whilst, if I ordered the post-horses and went to Naples, I should rid myself of my conscience, my hell, and my new friend." Thus did he muse, until he brought to his recollection the features of Walsingham. He was tall, well-looking, clever, quick, engaging; there was an ease and

elegance in his manner, and his natural behaviour was that best designated by "simplicity being the highest effort of art." His history he was resolved to fathom ; for, although not much past thirty in age, his eye was sunken, his cheeks were furrowed, he had a strong expression of care, and at times he was perfectly melancholy. But with this there was a quick, cunning look : he seemed always vigilant, lest he should be surprised ; and when hastily observed, his face flushed, and he generally turned away. In conversation he hardly ever looked his companion in the face ; and had not Douglass been doomed—fated, to become a victim, he might have read dishonesty on his very face. Now he was established in his house as his old school-fellow, he knew Julia would, to please him, pay him every attention ; that thus he should admit a stranger into his confidence, and the unguarded heart of his wife would be liable to be assailed by this cold, heartless, crafty man. Douglass saw that Walsingham had some view in visiting him, and that he had brought the letter merely as a pretext ; however he had

strengthened his approaches—whatever his views might be, he was now going a fair road on which he might exercise his skill. Julia and Douglass dined at home, and for the first time since their marriage the latter began to feel dull after dinner; their usual amusement, chess, had no charms for him, and he could not animate himself sufficiently to relate anecdotes as he sat at her feet, his head resting in her lap, as was his customary mode when she was inclined to kill an hour in knitting a purse, and believing she was usefully employed.

Douglass escaped unscathed or unobserved. Julia suggested that Paris, gay as it was, might still be stupid, and she hinted the trip to Naples as more conducive to amusement than idling away the time in France. Douglass suspected that she had discovered his falsehood, and he hardly dared to look her in the face; but he answered, that the winter had now begun, that she was too delicate to undertake so long a journey, and that Houghton, indisposed already, and suffering from cold, could not safely be removed from their present residence;

but that he was ready to acquiesce in any arrangements she might wish to make, for that all places were the same to him as long as Julia was there.

She patted his head, and they passed the evening after that remark in a more social style ; so easy is it to lead the heart of an affectionate woman even by the simplest words !

At a quarter to six the following day Walsingham called. Julia was in the salon, for Douglass had not quite completed his toilet, and his friend availed himself of the few minutes to pour in a tide of compliments in regard to Douglass : he spoke of him as one who promised to make a figure in after life from his abilities at school, and really played the part so well that no woman alive could have penetrated the false veil he wore. The child was in the room ; of course he asked to see it, and as he took it in his arm and patted the little child's fat rosy cheek, he said, in a careless manner, " Well, my little cherub, and so like your mamma, too ! What's your little name, dear ? "

The child was too young to speak ; but Julia, with a mother's fondness, answered, " Say Houghton, little dear !" She looked up, and Walsingham's face was as white as snow ; she snatched the infant from his hands, for it was crying, returned it to the nurse, and then instantly turned her attention to her guest and offered him some wine : Walsingham said it was nothing but a spasm to which he had been much subject since his arrival in France, and which he attributed to the light wines. At this moment Douglass entered, and being quite prepared and the time nearly expired, they left the room, Douglass promising to be back early. This was the first time that he had dined out without his wife since their marriage, and he felt at every step that he was preparing the way to a little connubial coolness.

It was dark, and it rained ; the salon was immediately opposite, and they crossed without an idea that Julia's windows overlooked the entrance, and that a lamp, dim, it is true, like all the lamps at Paris, but yet sufficient to show the forms if not the faces of those who

passed under it, illumined the entrance. Julia saw them : she, with all the affection of a loving woman, had waited to see the carriage pass, but she heard no roll of wheels ; she knew her husband took no umbrella—the wind was high, and the rain pattered against the windows—she saw, and no doubt she recognised them, as they passed under the arch which leads through the court to the door.

They were just in time ; the company had assembled—the receiving-room was full. When the doors opened and dinner was announced, the little count, leading the brother of a celebrated minister to a foreign court through the hazard, the rouge-et-noir rooms, to the dinner apartment, was followed by the rest in rather a rush than a deliberate movement : each man seemed anxious to arrive as soon as possible, not so much with the idea of losing a mouthful, as of procuring a place free from the draughts of air which forced themselves through the heated room whenever the door was opened. Douglass was much struck with the elegance of the table : a long plateau, richly ornamented,

ran nearly the whole length ; the room was well lighted, and the candelabra were in the best taste. A profusion of wine was on the table, and he had the curiosity to remark that only twenty-eight people sat down to dinner, and that there were no less than fourteen bottles of Champagne, besides common wines, on the table. The Sherry and Madeira were handed round.

On one side of him sat Walsingham ; on the other was a middle-sized man of about fifty, but with a quickness of eye which became youth more than sobered manhood : but of the other guests he could not but remark that the haggard countenances bespoke the victims from whose pockets all this glare and gold was supported. There is something in the countenance of an Englishman which any observer would recognise at a glance : they have neither the round, fat, solemn face of the German, the sharp monkey cut of the French, the dark olive hue of the Spaniard, the heavy gaze of the Swede, the downward glance of the Russian, the small eyes of the Tartar, nor the excel-

lent chisel of the Italian ; but they have faces cut between the German and the Danish, being nearer the latter than any. The half bald-headed companion on Douglass's right broke down the barrier of English reserve, and thus began :

“ I am afraid the weather ” (an Englishman must begin with that) “ has turned to a determined rain, and Paris will be as nice a sheet of mud as a man need paddle through.”

“ It is rather a bad night,” replied Douglass, “ and seems much inclined to continue.”

“ *Le vermicelle d'Italie au blanc de veau,*” said one of the waiters, offering soup.

Douglass took it ; whilst another following, offered Walsingham “ *la Chantilly aux croustons.*”

“ This,” said Douglass to his new acquaintance, “ is excellent : one reads of magnificent entertainments, but I never anticipated seeing anything half so splendid as this. Surely the expenses of this establishment must be prodigious ; for these dinners, I believe, take place twice a week.”

“*La culotte de bœuf à l’allemande*,” Douglass refused. “*La truite de lac, sauce génévoise*,” he accepted.

“Quite right,” replied the stranger; “and it comes out of young gentlemen’s pockets like yours. I wonder who did you so bad a service as to introduce you here? Take my advice and don’t come here again: if you do, these croupiers will take the starch out of you, I promise you.”

“I must play for them to use me so badly,” replied Douglass; “and that is not my present intention.”

“I fancy,” continued the stranger, “you would have been none the poorer if you had thought of that two nights ago.”

“*Les dindonneaux à la Godard*,” Douglass could not refuse; whilst his companion amused himself with playing a little with some “*jambon glacé aux épinards*.”

Douglass could not help smiling at the good-natured manner his new friend was pleased to hint at his ruin, and little did he dream at that moment how near he was to perdition: he was

fairly in the whirlpool, but in the intoxication of the twirl he did not feel himself sinking.

“Are you aware of the expense of this establishment?” he resumed; “for I cannot imagine how it can be supported.”

“Indeed!” replied the bald-headed friend. “Then you may fancy how well it does answer when I tell you that the company to whom this vagabond infamous establishment belongs pay the first of every month as a tax to the city of Paris twenty thousand pounds sterling, no less a sum than six millions of francs annually: then comes the salaries of the different commissioners; —that, for instance, of the little man is ——”

“Les petits vol-au-vents aux huitres?”—No.

“La timbale de nouilles à la mongla.”—Oui.

“—Twenty thousand francs. Sixteen thousand is paid to that tall handsome man opposite to him; the same to that little fat gentleman. Thirty-six francs is paid every night to each of the croupiers, with a handsome remuneration at Christmas if *all goes well*. Do you understand?” he continued as he touched Douglass with his sharp elbow; “if *all goes well*.

Then the rent of the house is about forty-five thousand francs a-year.—Look at these domestics—half of them are ready to lend you a thousand francs, although you are, you suppose, a stranger.—Then, these dinners, the papers, reviews, fires, lights, suppers. Add up all that, my young gentleman, if you can, without a slate; and then fancy what chance you can have of winning, when the odds must be so much against you, or how could this gaudy establishment exist?”

“*Le chaud froid de perdreaux à la gelée ?*”—
Douglass nodded a dissent.

“*La noix de veau piquée, purée de céleri.*”—
No.

“Is all that sum,” asked Douglass, “expended on this establishment alone?”

“Oh, no,” interrupted Walsingham; “they have a dozen others: the devil is not quite so black as he is painted.”

“There are four or five other licensed plunder abodes,” continued the stranger; “and in those haunts of iniquity, as well as here, every man is watched who enters: not Cerberus himself with

his triple-head watching the other hell, or Argus with his hundred eyes, can surpass in vigilance these attendants. By heavens! I have often thought that they had eight eyes, like spiders."

"Les poulets à la reine à l'ivoire."—Douglass shrugged his shoulders.

"Les filets de volaille aux truffes."

"Try that," said the stranger, "and let us have some Champagne; you will find that and water the best beverage, for it has not the acidity of the 'vin ordinaire,' and robs the wine of some of its dangerous strength: to drink much here, is to heat a furnace to burn your own fingers."

"I do not observe," continued Douglass, "that we are watched: who are the spies?"

"You will find that better displayed next door at Frascati's," said the elderly stranger. "This hint will suffice: as you enter, you will leave your hat and cloak at the door;—now, although hundreds pass in and out of the rooms, yet you will find that although you pass through in a moment and remain an hour, yet the

waiters in attendance will give you your own cloak and hat from the hundreds which are hanging around them : like George the Fourth, they never speak to a man whom they do not remember. But take my advice, don't play."

"But," answered Douglass, "I intend to play upon a *system*."

"They say," returned the new friend with much sharpness,—“they say in common life, a man is never ruined until he is married ; and here a man is never quite lost until he has discovered a system. As Adam says to Orlando, ‘this house is but a butchery ; avoid it, fear it, do not enter it.’”

"Then why do you come here yourself, sir, if you enact the scarecrow to others ?"

"Le filet de bœuf à la broche, sauce madère." —“Oui.” Walsingham took “les côtelettes de mouton à la jardinière,” a dish he much recommended, for he ate gloriously and drank amazingly.

"To continue my observations upon human nature," he replied, "there is no field for it like a den of gamesters. Your lover is but cold

in feeling to your gamester—your hero in war would shrink from the cool desperation yon pale haggard fellow would commit. The words of the satirist fall divested of their venom upon ears accustomed to the dice-box ; and the sparkles of wit or the glance of beauty are ineffectual upon either the head or heart of a determined player. To him the voice of reason is unavailing, the brilliancy of beauty has no effect : his heart is hardened by this worst of all excitements, and the voice of humanity calls in vain on the skeleton of human nature.”

“ I feel very much obliged to you,” said Walsingham with a slight colour on his cheek, “ for the amiable picture you have chosen to draw of people who frequent this house.”

“ Les filets de sols, à la horly, sauce tomate.” Douglass was satiated. The following waiter offered “ les cuisses de volaille à la bellevue ;” but he was hors de combat ; although another and another came, one offering “ la chartreuse de langues de mouton,” and the other, “ les perches de Seine à la waterfich ;” when the first course was removed, and the second brought.

“ If the cap fits, Walsingham,” replied the stranger, “ you can wear it. Perhaps the death of Rockingham would bear out my statement, and I fancy you know all about him. I never saw so dreadful a finish in my life ; and it is really horrible to imagine the misery he occasioned to his father.”

“ He changed his name before he died,” said Walsingham ; “ and that saved the old gentleman the disgrace he would otherwise have experienced. For myself, I don’t shoot until I am sure of the gallows or starvation.”

“ And you will change your name *again*, I suppose, before that *accords* with your feelings.”

“ Les poulets au cresson”—“ Les perdreaux rouges bardés ?” asked the nimble waiters.

Douglass now felt himself upon tender ground concerning Harry Houghton ; and from old Houghton’s story, he imagined that his elderly friend and Walsingham must have been the two persons present at the suicide’s last carouse. He thought it most prudent not to know anything about the matter, although he remarked

the crimson which covered Walsingham's face as the words "change your name *again*" were uttered, and his remarkably inquisitive look towards Douglass when the suicide's fate was mentioned : he therefore changed the conversation by asking "if no one gained who played here."

"Oh yes!" replied the elderly gentleman ; "they gain days of uneasiness and nights of sleepless anxiety, but no money. I hope you will lose at first—that may deaden your system ; but if you gain, I do not know any man more likely to be ruined than yourself. Take the advice of one who has seen in this place the affluent become beggars—the happy miserable : do not attempt to launch into a vortex which must destroy you. When you, like me, have had the sway of thousands—when age, and distress, and misfortune have inflicted upon you half the miseries they have showered upon my poor old bald pate,—for I am a grandfather, young as I may appear,—then you may be trusted to look upon these heaps of gold—to pity those who sigh to possess them, and despise those," and he

looked at Walsingham, "who obtain them unjustly. Now take what wine you require, for the custom is here not to wait long after dinner, and they only hand round claret once or twice."

"Then before we go, my dear sir, may I ask," said Douglass, "who is that gentleman on the right of the count?"

"That is," he replied, "the Duke de T——, brother of the man who has sworn allegiance to sixteen different governments,—a man of wonderful appetite, but the kindest and most amiable man alive. He has never altered the fashion of his dress for the last half-century: he is a man held in general estimation, wears a pigtail, eats much, plays little, is always courteous, and ever obliging. Now you know all about *him*."

"Now," continued Douglass, "who is that little hard-featured man next to the duke, and who wears that common decoration of the legion of honour?"

"That," replied the cicerone, "is an admiral of great reputation and little reward: he

has circumnavigated the globe, and has adorned science by the depth of his knowledge and the perseverance of his inquiries: he is familiar with all societies, but he never was in a more motley group than the present."

"Well, one more, then a glass of claret, and I have done," said Douglass. "Who is that remarkably handsome man with mustachios, who looks like Apollo amongst the Laplanders? I do not think I ever saw such a specimen of creation in my life, saving that he savours of sadness and is tinged with dejection?"

"He is an Englishman," was the reply; "and far better would it be for him to let the light of his countenance fall upon woman's eyes, than to lose their lustre at the hazard-table. He was much handsomer a week ago; but latterly he has been losing that which he can ill afford, and borrowing what he can never repay,—without, indeed, some Venus descends, like Jupiter, in a shower of gold as his wife."

"The Danaë being, I presume," answered Walsingham, "a *hazard*."

"Just so; but don't pun—it's worse than

gaming.—Now look at that gentlemanly personage with the air of a soldier and a face of defiance. He is just as great a goose as yourself;—don't start;—he had a system, he lost 60,000*l.* in two months; he had a large fortune, and now two hundred a year would be high bidding for all that is left.”

“Ah!” answered Douglass, “he never played upon my system.”

“Play upon your fiddlestick!” grunted the old gentleman. “Do you think you are going to discover a system to beat a certainty?—do you suppose all these grey-headed sinners have not pondered over every chance, and made every calculation, and yet find the pull of the table overcome them all? The doubling system is a fallacy when the stakes are limited; the pull in favour of the bank is a certainty.”

“What may it be in proportion to the relative games?” inquired Douglass.

“At hazard,” he replied, “it is about one and three quarters per cent. against the players; at rouge-et-noir, variable between four and seven per cent.; at roulette, seventeen per cent.

or rather more ; and at *creps* with the three dice, it is not one jot less than thirty per cent. But come into the coffee-room, and I will give you a few hints and endeavour to get you out of this cursed hell without being much hurt."

CHAPTER IV.

SERVANTS attended and poured out the “sober berry juice” from an urn; after which, those who relished liqueurs went to another table and had their choice of any they might please to name. The whole establishment was well conducted; and if they plundered you, they plundered you very genteelly. All ranks of society were to be found in this *regiment of rifles*, and it would have been fastidiousness indeed to have complained of the spread; the dinner was always as good as that from curiosity mentioned — of course only having given the principal *entrées*, for there was a profusion of sweets and a splendid dessert.

The play begins early on those nights when dinners are given; and Douglass soon found

Walsingham much inclined to keep him in sight. He seemed by no means pleased with the new acquaintance, and he watched him rather too closely to please Douglass. Twice Walsingham asked him if he intended to play ; but as he was more attached to his new friend, and he liked not the allusion to Rockingham and the change of name, he wished to glean some more intelligence both concerning the establishment, and of Walsingham, before he began upon his system. And this was done not without a great sacrifice on the part of Douglass ; he felt eagerly anxious to play, but the word ruin !—ruin !—ruin ! had been so often repeated by the elderly gentleman, that he took it as a second edition of the gipsy's prophecy.

“ You seem, sir,” said Douglass to his dinner friend, “ to be acquainted with every man in the room ; surely you must have been many years a resident in Paris, for I never remember to have heard any Englishman, with the exception of the eldest son of a certain marquis, who spoke so fluently or so elegantly as yourself.” He bowed and answered,

“ I have had my chances and changes in this mortal life ; and if I were to tell you my history, you would not wonder at my acquaintance with the language : suffice it to say, that I come here to get rid of myself. I am under no apprehension as to losing my money,—that’s all gone already. I never lost it here, or next door,—I never gamed : there are many modes of being ruined without gaming, but none so short and so sure. Do you see that old broken-down man so busily employed marking a card and not playing ? He is an Englishman of high rank in the army,—he was a man of large fortune, and is one of the many victimised here. He was reduced to the most abject poverty, for many weeks became a beggar to the very men who had plundered him : they rejected his petition, until some others of our countrymen interfered, and they now allow him five francs a day, which is all he has to subsist upon ; and yet such is the infatuation of this terrible vice, that you see him there, decrepit with age and misfortune, hovering round the table at which he is forbid to play, and marking every time

the different colours win with as much eagerness as if thousands depended upon the card. But I will take you to Frascati's by-and-bye ; and there I can show you one or two more who lower over the paradise of their imagination, the flimsy cloud of their own misfortunes.—That fine-looking man yonder is one of Napoleon's best generals ; he is just returned from Portugal : he has a system, and he is half ruined. See how he rubs the gold between his fingers, as if loath to part with his old friend, knowing he never will see it again ! Observe how the manliness of his features is disturbed, and fancy what he suffers by playing.”

“ Not so much as I do,” replied Douglass, “ from shunning it.”

At this moment Walsingham went near the table to speak to some one, and Douglass said, “ Who is that man who brought me here ?”

Before, however, the stranger could utter more than “ Avoid him !” he was back at their side and he never left Douglass for one moment. About midnight he retired to his hotel a loser of about thirty thousand francs : it was

between the conversation and the loss that Douglass visited Frascati's.

This sink of iniquity has often been described, and the description here shall be brief. The victims enter an antechamber in which are some four or five servants, all ready to divest them of either hat or cloak; and it is during this second of time that the person is so well watched by these active Cerberuses, that no one enters who is not known, and no one departs who is not marked. In the first room is roulette,—a game admirably adapted for the despairing gambler, as he replenishes his purse, if Fortune favours him, at one *coup*; in the next room is rouge-et-noir; and in a third is creps, — a species of hazard played with three dice, the odds being immense against the player. But, as if the excitement of play was not sufficient to lure the eager youngster, women of a certain—or rather, uncertain description are admitted: but seldom does the face of beauty shed a momentary glare over this wretched institution; those who have the *entrée* are neither fascinating enough to cause the un-

wary to play, or the wary to love. In such a place, the charms must be great to excite attention; for the eyes of many are on the women to see that they endeavour to lure a victim, not to their arms, but to the gripe of the croupier.

The little ivory ball of roulette performs its various gyrations in the cylinder, the croupiers calling "*Faites le jeux,—ça va, ça va,*" until at last the quick eye of the regulator, perceiving that the ball is about to touch one of the little brass nobs, calls out, "*Rien va plus!*" in hops the little ball into a nook, the number of which, whether odd or even, its colour, &c. being declared aloud, the winner, if such there be, is paid his apparently exorbitant proportions, and the long rakes soon transfer the money of the loser to the grasp of the croupier.

The women surround this table, and venture to predict the number likely to win; enticing the man who perhaps is more captivated by the eyes of the seducer than the excitement of the game, to venture a little, and then a little

more, until at last he becomes night after night a constant attendant, when the tardy remittances to Lafitte warn him of the necessity of return, and that necessity saves him from actual ruin.

At this hell Douglass never felt inclined to gamble ; the room was too crowded, and the constant interruption of the women, stretching their bare arms to snatch the gained five francs, rather disturbed calculation than excited precipitation.

Could he have been reclaimed, here was the place. He heard several who had lingered near this fatal table giving vent to their feelings, and describing their loss in the usual off-hand manner : “ Done brown ! ” said one ; — “ Cleaned out ! ” said another ; — “ Not a covey remaining ! ” said a third ; — “ I ’m off ! ” said a fourth. But amidst all the complaining some jokes escaped. One old Frenchman, who had been busily marking a card, at last screwed up his resolution to the proper pitch, and having said, “ Now it is sure—now I must win ! ” he poked down the remaining money standing

before him: his certainty was fallacious,—he lost; and immediately he rose and *sacr  *'d most violently, declaring himself the most unfortunate man in the whole world; and running his head against the mantelpiece, he began to batter his brains.

An Irishman who watched this unusual conduct at first said that the man was blinded by misfortune; but an Englishman, who corrected him, declared the man was not blind, but in the agony of acknowledged ruin. “Then by Jasus!” replied the first, “he’s afraid to look up on his ruin, and he wants to get a *wall eye*!”

“I’ll just try my luck for a few notes,” said a tall handsome young man, whom Douglass recognised as the one pointed out to him at the Salon: he placed a five hundred franc note on the red.

“Faites le jeu!—Le jeu est fait!” continued the ever-active croupier. Away went the cards. “Trois,” said the little man; again a second row of cards, and “Cinq” was the result. “Rouge perd et la couleur!” and away went the note.

"This is the wrong side," said the Englishman ; and he placed a billet of one thousand francs on the black.

Again the little man murmured, "*Faites le jeu !—Le jeu est fait !*" and dealing the first row, said "*Sept ;*" then came the second, "*Quatre.*" "*Rouge gagne, couleur perd !*" and the one thousand note followed that of the five hundred.

"Sharp work !" said he.

"I think so," replied Douglass ; and having wasted half an hour, during which time the company had changed once or twice, he went to the antechamber, and received his own hat, although there must have been two hundred people at least in the room. Douglass was quite satisfied that the old gentleman had not deceived him, and that every man who entered into that house was a marked man. He then returned to the Salon.

Is there such a thing as fate ? if so, Douglass might have been happy. And why should he deny the creed ? does not the Mussulman who places his neck in the bowstring believe in it, and

dies happy ? When the bastinado is applied, does not the belief in the preordination fortify him against the pain ? when his house is burnt, his harem violated, his disgrace certain, does he not quietly smoke his chibouk, and as he mutters the word “ Takdeer ” (destiny), bows with submission to what he believes unavoidable ?

It is thus the foolish would reconcile themselves to their folly under the umbrella of predestination ; and we scarcely ever met a gamester who was not tinctured with this belief. But if we are responsible agents, fearful is the catalogue of crime against the man who impoverishes his wife and family ; robs, or is sure to wish so to do ; and after wasting life with scarcely one atoning virtue, finishes his career by suicide.

Douglass had this portrait before him. He knew the results of gaming ; and yet, strange to say, he fell. He would not avoid it, even if he could. This is written to make others shudder—to scare the greedy speculators from a place where ruin sits on sofas, and wretchedness is reflected in the mirror. And now to

return home with a lie in his mouth and smelling of a gaming-house !

The next morning Douglass arose pale and feverish. It was necessary to write to Verity in order that he might sell out some stock to replace the money lost. And here again he turned every idea into one of deception. He hardly knew what course to pursue. At last it occurred to him to say that he had acceded to the wish of his wife in purchasing some French furniture, some Sèvres porcelain, and so forth, for Longdale, and that he hoped her fit of extravagance was now at an end. He begged him to place the money as quickly as possible in the hands of his London banker, as he was anxious to continue his tour into Italy, more especially as he did not think the air of Paris agreed with his wife.

Depend upon it, there is nothing like a lie with a circumstance attached to it ; you are sure to deceive even your worst enemy. Douglass had despatched this letter before breakfast ; and when he saw Julia enter with a downcast, dejected look, he felt as if he had occasioned

the change. "My child! my child!" he began, as if feeling for the infant, not one thought of whom had troubled his frenzy, "is he worse, Julia?—is poor dear little Houghton worse?"

She took his hand, and kissed his cheek; her eyes were suffused with tears; and when she said, "Thank God, the baby is better!" she seemed to hint that Douglass betrayed symptoms of illness.

"You are ill, Robert," she continued: the eye of affection can soon discover sickness in the person of a husband. "What time last night—" and here, as if afraid to continue, she stopped.

"No, my dear," he replied, "not particularly. I have, I think, caught a little cold, which I hope will leave me before the day is over.—But how did the child sleep?—Why, *you* look pale and haggard."

"I did not sleep at all last night. I waited to hear you return, and—"

"Why, Julia, my dear! what can ail you! why this hasty check? you seem as if afraid to speak; what has become of your usual curio-

sity? would you not like to hear of Walsingham's dinner?"

"No!" she replied with unusual energy: "I have no curiosity to pry into the secrets of others."

If Douglass had not known himself the villain he felt himself to be, he might have been alarmed at the difference of manner in Julia, so very unusual in one who always counted the minutes he was absent; who knew his step, and rushed to meet him; whose whole soul seemed wrapped up in the words of her husband.

"Then I will tell you, without your prying," he said with a laugh. "We dined at Véry's in the Palais Royal; and never did I witness more hospitality than from Walsingham. We were only six at dinner."

"Stop! stop!" said Julia, "in pity's sake stop! I do not want to hear one word more; do not—do not make me eternally miserable! Let me implore you, stop!"

"This is most strange, my dear Julia! Are my occupations—my little amusements uninteresting to you? are you so changed, that even

your tears must fall when I would fain amuse you?"

"It is for your own sake," replied Julia, "that I will not hear; it is that I should not be made miserable by ceasing to admire you. Tell me, Robert, frankly, have I ever since the day we married occasioned you one bitter moment,—have I ever failed in the duty of a true and affectionate wife?"

"Good God!" said Robert, rather alarmed, "are you mad, Julia?—what can be the upshot of this eloquence?"

"I ask you," continued the poor thing, sobbing, "have I ever failed in my duty to you?"

"No, certainly not," he replied; "and I hope this is mutual: I trust you will exonerate me."

There was no answer, but she cried and sobbed most piteously: at last she continued, "Oh, heavens! that we, who have every luxury on earth, should thus be made miserable!—that we, who have known as much happiness as the world could shower upon us, must perhaps eat the

bread of labour, and exchange all our comforts for penury and disgust ! That the sayings of a gipsy should be realised !—that ——”

“Why, Julia, my love,” he interrupted, “surely my ears deceived me ! Can you be frightened at a shadow?—can the words of a gipsy cause all these tears—all these apprehensions?”

“No, Robert, no ; I am not the simpleton to believe in any such shilling prophecies. But come here,” she said ; and taking him by the arm, she led him to the window. “Do you see that house opposite?” she continued. Douglass felt the flesh creep upon his bones. “Nay, answer me ; what house is *that* ?”

“Do you take me, Julia,” he replied, “for Galignani’s Paris Guide, that I should know each house in the street ? Why, what can make you so moved at the sight of a house you must have seen for a month ! Really this is too silly ! If you want to know, I can easily ask the question.”

“Will you promise me, Robert, never to enter that house ?”

“To be sure, my dear. Why should I wish to

enter a house to which I am a stranger, and in which——”

“Stop—stop, Robert ; I hardly dare to tell you ; and yet I feel I should be wanting in my own duty if I hesitated. Do not, I pray you, make me know the truth of the last line of the gipsy’s prophecy.”

“Still,” he interrupted, “harping upon that precious doggrel.”

“Still and for ever,” she continued. “Tell me, Robert, what would you say to me if I told you an untruth, when your own eyes had witnessed the occurrence, and you knew I was saying what was false ?”

“I should *despise* you.”

“Nay, nay, any other word but that, Robert ; choose from out the whole catalogue of the dictionary, but omit that word—that recorded, hated word. I will not let you fall into the error your consideration for me has prompted you to do. When you left me last night with that man, for whom I have entertained a decided hatred notwithstanding his compliments, I ran to the window to see even the

carriage which contained my own, my dear Robert. The rain fell fast, the night was dark and windy ; and yet, as Heaven is my judge, I saw you and your friend cross the street and enter that house. Nay, look,—our window commands that which lightens the staircase ; the lamp shone bright, and I saw you and Walsingham enter the door on the right hand. Believing you had called for some other friend, I waited to see you return ; I stood at this window fixed as a monument until half-past eight o'clock, when, just as I was about to give poor Houghton what he required, I saw you and your *friend* leave that house and enter the next. I returned from the greatest pleasure a mother experiences, to the greatest curse a wife can know. I saw you leave the second house, and with a hurried step again enter that house. The waiter happened to come in at the moment ; I asked him to whom that residence belonged : imagine my horror when I learnt that those two buildings contributed to ruin young Houghton ; and that you—for I saw you go in—you were now in the mesh from which few ever escaped !

I could not sleep ; I waited and waited half frantic, when at two o'clock I saw you pass the lamp at the entrance and cross the street : I hurried to my room and prayed ; but sleep has been a stranger to me. I know the danger by which we are surrounded ; and, Robert, hate me not for that which led to the discovery, for it was founded on affection matured by love. Now I fear the child will suffer from my fretting and my apprehension. I dare not send for a nurse, for the medical attendant declared any change in Houghton's case might be fatal."

"And you watched me, Julia, in order to convict me—to lessen me in your own estimation—to hold me in check—to extract the falsehood, and then to beard me with the truth?"

"Oh ! just Heaven, what misery—what fresh misery is in store for me ! I told you, Robert, that the wish to see even the carriage that conveyed you first tempted me to the window : now it becomes a mother's duty to avoid that irritation of mind which might poison the stream of Houghton's existence ; and my only mode of avoiding it is thus—" (and she threw

herself upon her knees,)—"to pray—to implore you to forgive me an apparent curiosity—to restore me to your good opinion—to believe me incapable of duplicity, and as fond and as affectionate as on that day which saw us united.—Oh!" she said, as he raised her from the floor, and as she threw her arms round his neck; "leave this place—leave this hated spot: better would it be to *risk* the life of Houghton by moving, than of insuring it by remaining here. Even now I should give the natural sustenance to our son, and I dare not; I much fear I have already increased the mischief: but you, Robert, must make *me* happy, and then he will thrive."

Douglass scarcely knew what to do—what to say. Here this excellent creature, instead of branding him with the infamy he deserved, was soliciting pardon for a proof of affection, since that affection had led to a discovered duplicity on his part. He was overcome by shame: he felt the guilt which was justly attached to him; and after kissing her fondly, he endeavoured to soothe her into quietude.

“Oh ! generous Robert,” she continued, “thus to forgive my first fault : but do—pray do leave Paris. How often have I thought over the history of young Houghton ! But he was different to you, for he hated his wife : but you, Robert, you still love me ; and although I fancy I see a slight alteration, yet that must be in the vexation of loss, or the displeasure at the discovery. I hope before to-morrow’s sun has set we shall be far away from here.”

“I cannot go yet, my dear,” replied Douglass ; “I have written to Verity for some money which it is absolutely requisite to have, and until I get that letter it would be impossible to leave Paris.”

“Then grant me this one request,” she continued : “promise me never to place your foot inside that door again. Remember to what you owe your prosperity, and let not the same means lead to adversity and poverty. I feel as a mother ought : I know that Houghton and myself have no settlement or entailment ; that when once the inroad is made upon the prin-

cipal, the rest is in jeopardy. Do you remember, when you first warned me against extravagance, your remark, that although the ship was large and strong, one plank might lead her to destruction ; that the citadel was safe until the smallest breach was made in the wall ;—in short, as the French say, ‘*Ce ne que le premier pas qui coûte ?*’ I do hope,” she continued, “that your loss has not been severe : and if this infatuation has so entirely taken possession of you, do now that which will make your family secure—that which will place us beyond want, should you persevere in this course of destruction. Now forgive me, Robert, and I will see the child.”

He kissed her again and again ; he regarded her as his guardian angel : he felt that a hand was extended to save him from the overwhelming wave, and he became in lighter spirits and in merrier mood.

In the mean time an alteration had taken place for the worse in little Houghton, and Douglass was warned by the medical attendant on no account to allow the slightest thing to agi-

tate his wife : in fact, he mentioned that he did not regard his child as free from danger, but he hoped that his skill was sufficient to surmount the obstacles. He promised to call in the evening, and scarcely had he left the house before Mr. Walsingham was announced.

The conversation had reference to that hell which he had latterly frequented. In all his words he evidently endeavoured to defend the system, and to show that many had been very successful ; that they only saw the shadows, whereas the substance was away revelling in riches. He added, that the Salon was supported by those timid players who were scared at their first loss, and who wanted the common courage of the Spaniard to risk a little more in order to recover themselves. He ridiculed all the wise saws of the elderly gentleman, whom he represented as a disappointed person, and who had suffered from a want of common caution in play.

“ Your system,” he added, “ must succeed : but you must remember to adhere to your own rules ; it was by infringing those that you suf-

ferred so much last night.” He then quietly hinted that he intended to avail himself of Douglass’s kind invitation to dinner. This, however, was parried on account of Houghton’s indisposition, postponing the *pleasure* until a future occasion.

Douglass had previous to this visit made a fixed determination never to enter that place again ; but, alas ! even Walsingham had power to shake his resolution. He pondered over his words. He thought himself already one infirm of purpose ; he regarded himself as a craven coward ; and he shook from his heart the persuasions of Julia, and the imbecilities of affection. He passed the day in idle vacancy ; he had no spirit to undertake any work ; he heard the medical gentleman when he warned him of the change in Houghton for the worse with listless indifference : so true is the sentence, “ Where the treasure is, there is the heart also.”

In the mean time the hours dragged on through the day, and, after many soothing medicines, Houghton fell asleep : and no sooner was Julia aware that her presence could be dispensed

with, than she flew to her husband. Douglass had not seen the boy for the whole day, and now she insisted on his visiting the cradle, in order to see how much altered he was. With cautious step they moved from room to room : at last he stood by his son. There lay the emblem of innocence, his face ruddy with fever, his little lips apart, and yet so slightly came the breath as to be almost inaudible. In vain the nurse covered the little arms now emaciated by sickness, the heated infant soon released itself from the enthrallment ; whilst the danger of its awaking rendered it expedient to use some lighter covering. Julia took a scarf which she wore round her neck and placed it over the exposed limbs. She grasped her husband's hand, and having dismissed the attendant, knelt by the side of the cradle and lifted up her hands in earnest prayer. Douglass did the same. He knelt, and in the fulness of his heart he poured out his soul before Him who humbles the proud and who succours the distressed. He saw the tears course down the smooth cheek of his young wife, and he found his own bursting from

their concealment. He prayed ; and Heaven is witness how fervent—how sincere were his prayers. They rose ; and as he gazed on the little innocent creature, Julia's soft voice stole above the stillness, and he heard her say,

“ To what wretchedness does a momentary wildness lead ! I would not upbraid you, Robert, when I see that the spark of affection still burns within your bosom. Look at your child ; already has the warning voice of the physician told me of the danger, already must you perceive how much of life has left that dear infant's breast. Oh ! what should, what should I do, if it were taken from me !—I am told to be composed,” she said as her tears ran in torrents from her eyes ; “ but no one can command obedience when the heart is sad, and yet could I be happy if I felt that you were so ? But no, Robert ; that sunken eye, that haggard look, that compressed lip, seem to indicate the resolution of despair. If so, gather greater resolution from your wife, who, if the branch is severed from the parent tree, will bow in all submission to Him who inflicts the blow, and cling the closer to him

whose duty it is to shelter and protect her.” Douglass made an effort to speak ; but the child turned restlessly in the cradle. “Hush, hush, my love !” said Julia as she placed her finger to her lips ; “hush, hush, dearest !” and she beckoned him from the apartment.

CHAPTER V.

THAT no man can understand the power of the lure of gaming without he be a gamester, is certain. The scene described in the last chapter, although of course far, far from the reality—for no man can write an emphasis, as a learned lawyer once said—was sufficient to have cowered any heart. Douglass saw his child asleep, 'tis true, but in a fevered slumber; he had been told of the probable event, and that nothing but the restoration of peace to the mind of Julia afforded the slightest hope of recovery. Even with these dreadful warnings rung in his ears, he stole from his bed at midnight, crossed the way, and returned again a loser of about four thousand pounds. It seemed one eternal tide of misfortune; and when for a moment the flood-

tide of success occurred, he was so beaten by the continued loss that he feared to avail himself of it ; whereas, whenever the ebb began to run, he flew in the face of the inconstant goddess, and endeavoured to shame her to his service by showing how daringly he combated her power. This rule ought to be engraven on every gamester's mind : " When losing, be chary of your stakes, be moderate in your bets ; when winning, be generous, be bold, and success *may* follow."

It is useless to return to the misery of home : the peace once violated, mistrust once engendered, suspicions once entertained, and affection must be shaken. It was singular how exactly he had trodden as yet in the paths of young Houghton, excepting that he still loved his wife. Day after day lingered on ; when, to the great *delight* of Douglass, he heard of the death of his best friend, to whom alone he could have applied for advice and assistance. He was sitting with his forehead on his hands, cursing his folly and his fortune, when he received the following letter from Mr. Verity's partner.

“Argyle Street, 14 December 18—.

“DEAR SIR,

“It becomes a painful duty of mine to announce to you the demise of my late very lamented partner Mr. Verity. His death was occasioned by a cold caught in the service of one of his clients, which settling on his lungs, soon overcame his constitution, and after lingering in great pain about six weeks, he expired the day after the reception of your letter. In conformity with your desire, I enclose you the money required.

“Mr. Verity was sufficiently himself to read your letter ; and he most earnestly requested me to urge upon you the necessity of settling your landed property, with a portion of your funded money, on your son Houghton ; and I promised him to use all the influence of a stranger in order to complete so desirable an end. Mr. Verity, who took a great interest in yourself and your welfare, implored me to urge your return to England ; and I promised him that when I received your instructions, not a moment should be lost in completing the deed, the rough

copy of which has already been drawn by Mr. Verity. I urge this the more strongly upon you at this moment, because I am about to withdraw from business, feeling myself quite unable to carry it on with that talent of which death has deprived me. I therefore beg you will, as soon as convenient, give me the necessary instructions, or name some firm to whom I shall consign your title-deeds, &c. &c. Of course fresh powers of attorney will be requisite, in order that your solicitors may receive your dividends, &c. With my best compliments to Mrs. Douglass, I am, sir,

Your very obedient servant,

RICHARD HONOR."

Douglass was overjoyed at this news: it released him from all the shackles of the law; he was a free man, and in the liberty he acquired he forgot the meanness, the heartless, shameless ingratitude which caused him to smile with devilish satisfaction when the friend of his benefactor—nay, *his* best friend, was suddenly taken from him. He was in the state of high exultation when Julia entered, and even her sorrowing

countenance brightened when she saw his so excited.

“What good news has Robert for his Julia?” she began, “that now he looks himself again. See, see what a quiet night can produce devoid of the excitement of gaming. What ! not one kiss for your own dear Julia ? and am I so altered that I must solicit my morning’s welcome ?”

He kissed her ; then putting on all the hypocrisy of man’s nature, managed to pretend to weep, to “mimic sorrow when the heart was not sad ;” and after uttering one or two words preparatory to breaking the news, he placed the letter in Julia’s hand, and she read it.

“Another heavy blow !” she began : “that man was our protector,—his honesty, his candour was our shield. But here is no time to be lost, Robert—you must go to town this evening ; by delay your affairs may become embarrassed, and I need not urge upon you how strongly I feel the necessity of your complying with Mr. Verity’s last advice. Houghton is better, and I have great hopes that all will yet be well.—But come, Robert, although we never have part-

ed since our marriage, yet now I see the necessity, I shall not fret: moreover, as I hope it will make your mind easier when you have settled your affairs, I will do my utmost to keep up my spirits and to recover my boy; he is now considered out of all present danger, and I shall write to you every post. If you have time, run down to Longdale, and look," she added with a smile which well conveyed her meaning, "at old Houghton's monument."

It so happened that a place in the *malle poste* was vacant; and, willing not to lose a moment, Douglass determined to avail himself of that conveyance in preference to his carriage. A small portmanteau was soon packed, the passport was soon signed, and he spent the rest of the day in fondling his boy and making promises to his wife. Walsingham had called, but had been refused. There was, however, one little event which Douglass had overlooked: in a week's time, bills which he had given for eight thousand pounds would become due, and he had omitted to mention to whom he should remit the money in order that the holder of the bills

might receive payment ; he had put off the business from day to day, and now had forgotten it. Julia and her husband dined early on the day of departure ; at half-past five he left his hotel, having again felt the tenderness of love and experienced the warm delight of affection.

At six o'clock he drove out of the court-yard of the post-office ; he jolted over gutters, twisted round corners, and underwent as much exercise in an hour as a fox-hunter gets in a hard run. His companion was a fat Frenchman, who had carefully enveloped himself in about ten coats, had covered his head with a seal-skin cap, and his mouth with a dirty shawl, leaving his nose only visible, through which he contrived to snore when asleep, although he stuffed it with enormous pinches of snuff when awake. His whole time was spent in snoring, snuffing, coughing, and spitting. He once tried a cigar, but Douglass objected ; and they never exchanged words until they arrived at Amiens, where they were turned out in a dirty wet street, to walk some distance to the Hotel de la Poste whilst the mail drove on to the post-office, in

order that they might be refreshed and reinvigorated by a towel and some coffee.

Douglass had full time for reflection and for the formation of plans. He determined for the future to be the possessor of his own papers, and to allow his bankers to receive his dividends, giving them a power of attorney for that, as well as one to enable them to sell out stock should he require it. The deeds relative to Longdale he resolved to place also at his banker's, so as to have everything under immediate control ; and when he summed up his losses, he found himself already deficient twenty thousand pounds, besides the money owed, with the disease incurable upon him.

With visions of better fortune before him, he dozed into all the slumber one can experience in such a vehicle, and was heartily glad when nine the next night arrived and he could see the light-house of Calais. By ten he was as comfortable as Rignolle could make him : and if civility and a good house are conducive to comfort, it will be found where he slept on the night of his arrival.

The sea was calm, the weather fair; the steam-boat made her passage in three hours, and once more he was on English ground, a lodger in Payne's York Hotel. How widely different are the two countries, and yet how close! It is impossible to find within the same distance so marked a contrast as may be seen by merely crossing the water to France.

The next day he was in town; and his first visit was to Mrs. Walton. He found her in the full enjoyment of health, dangling a child of about eighteen months old on her knees, and every now and then making the child say "Papa" for a sugar-plum. She looked the picture of contentment, although by no means so gay and lively as he had known her. By her side, on the sofa, was her sister Amelia, a girl of about eighteen, fresh, rosy, and pretty—a walking image of Louisa during the days of her youth and innocence. He remarked that Louisa was more sedate in her manner, and soon found that she had become serious in religious matters: and by the word 'serious' be it understood as endeavouring to describe that "righteousness over-

much" which in our own days has become not only so predominant, but so fashionable. Perhaps her former life might have led her to this consolation, for women are mostly in extremes; and that she thus endeavoured to make amends for her former transgressions, as sinners when about to die make friends with their enemies, and by way of cheating the Devil, build an hospital or endow a college, leaving half their own families paupers on the parish.

Her sister was a lively contrast. Whilst the face of one had become habituated to a certain demureness of expression, the other was lit up by the bright eyes of youth and innocence; and he allowed her unreserved remarks to flow from the prettiest lips which ever pouted an impertinence.

The reason of Douglass's visit was soon explained. Louisa groaned over the death of Verity, but forgot the loss of her friend in the pious apprehension that he might not have been prepared. She could give Douglass no worldly information; and when he asked about Mr. Honor, he received for answer that he had bet-

ter “keep his house in order.” To a question relative to her sister-in-law and Charles, he only gleaned that they were following “the paths of the wicked—rioting and chambering;” that they lived more like Heathens than Christians, and devoted themselves to Satan by frequenting the assemblies of the sinners.

Amelia kindly gave him more assistance. She assured him that Charles was excessively steady; that Margaret loved him just as much as ever she did, and that she had never yet heard of the slightest difference having occurred; that Margaret was much admired for her beauty, but no scandal had ever been whispered against her. Douglass soon found Amelia lent a ready ear to his vivid descriptions of Parisian pleasures; and when he mentioned his intention—for he was not asked—of dining with the Waltons that day, in order to consult Mr. Walton upon business, Amelia declared herself in raptures with the prospect of again listening to the recital of pleasures she so ardently desired to share.

At dinner, Douglass remarked that Walton

participated in the gloomy taciturnity of his wife, and he began seriously to think that they esteemed it a sin to be happy. Wine, that generous orator—that revealer of the inmost heart—that dispenser of joy and destroyer of sorrow—that miracle by which the poor believe themselves rich, was held in abhorrence ; it was offered, but offered in the same manner that the admirers of Socrates might have proffered the poison to him.

From Walton he gleaned nothing, saving that he had always managed his own affairs ever since he heard that Mr. Verity attended the Epsom Races ; and that as for Mr. Honor, to his certain knowledge he had been often to the theatres, and *therefore* was not a man in whom he would put any trust.

It is said that ruin always makes a man a Radical, and that the disappointed are always Reformers ; but what had converted Walton was to Douglass quite a puzzle. He had never *assisted a friend*, and therefore could not have been neglected ; he had never tried any speculation, to his knowledge, excepting that of marriage in the way of a time bargain, and there-

fore had never lost,—and that speculation he made with his eyes open, and with greedy hands ready to grasp the treasure : but he had become evidently a convert to the new light, and considered tea and tracts as much more conducive to the healthy state of both body and soul than rich dinners and generous wines.

Douglass was glad to escape from the tête-à-tête after the frugal repast ; and he hastened to converse with Amelia, who had become more attached to him from his being the only person she had seen who was not of that straight-haired order. Her lively remarks were frequently checked by her guardian angel Mrs. Walton, who now considered it a breach of the Sabbath to laugh, and a profanation to wear a cheerful countenance : so true it is, that women rush into extremes, and endeavour to make up in the sanctity of age what they lost in the levity of youth.

Poor Amelia was considered as a lost mortal : although endowed with a very proper sense of religion, she could not alter nature, and fix upon the shoulders of eighteen the heavy noddle of

seventy. To Douglass's offer of taking her to Paris she acceded instantly ; and even Louisa did not withhold her consent : since her marriage with Walton, and her altered manner in regard to that seriousness, she had grown rather penurious, and had imbibed all the bad qualities of that over-righteous sect which holds the innocent meeting of people at dances as dangerous to salvation, and regards a dinner-party as a challenge to the Devil.

Douglass considered the hasty assent to his offer as a proof that Amelia was tolerated rather than beloved, and that her sister did not relish the increase of the weekly bills occasioned by the little additional expense they found it requisite to incur in order that they might still have the reputation of being not only liberal, but fashionable. It is very strange, but it is true, that no people who outwardly pretend to carnal mortification have so much inherent pride as the righteous over much. Poor souls ! whilst they see their neighbours rejoicing in the vortex of perdition, they groan over the miseries which they are entailing upon them-

selves : but only entice one of the righteous with the same lure, and all the milliners are bothered for a month to bedizen the body of the saint. Sackcloth and ashes are very proper things of which to read ; but who ever heard of one of our modern female saints who adopted the costume ? The fact is, that whenever you see a woman overdressed,—which means, almost entirely undressed,—you will find she is either a desperate saint, or a despairing sinner. Mediocrity is best, especially in women.

The next day Douglass busily employed himself arranging his affairs. He sold out a considerable sum of money to meet the debts he had contracted, and to pay the sums he had lost ; he wrote a most affectionate letter to his wife, and he finished it with a prayer for the safety of Houghton.

The title-deeds he removed to his banker's ; and he gave a fresh power of attorney to a solicitor of the name of Crimp, who, he was given to understand, would be a most useful friend in any emergency. Douglass gave him to understand that he was the possessor of Longdale,

and desired him at his first convenience to go down there with a surveyor, and to make an estimate of the property: not that he had any intention of selling it at that moment, but that he wished to ascertain its real value.

Douglass then ran down to his mother-in-law's cottage, and found her no longer Mrs. Anson, but Mrs. Marshall. The worthy rector had taken the widow to wife, and he found that his room was better than his company—for they had only committed the rashness the preceding day, and were so happy in each other's society that they evidently did not want his. He therefore proffered a thousand congratulations, hastily ran over the account of Julia's and Houghton's health, the reason of his visit to England, the death of Verity, and his determination to take over Amelia as a companion for Julia, and likewise to save her from becoming at her tender age such a very serious character as her sister. He then looked at the church, cast his eyes upon his old cottage, jumped into his carriage, and, returned to town.

His principal business being concluded, and a

great part of his principal being absorbed, he prepared to leave town for Paris, having previously written to Stanhope, and promised to take every care of his sister, and not to throw her in the way of falling in love with any of the forty thousand self-made marquises who infest the French capital.

Every preparation having been made, Amelia and himself left town and proceeded to Dover. They were, as the reader may have known, not overmuch acquainted; for previous to Douglass's arrival in England, he had never seen her. Stanhope had often spoken about her as a forward pretty girl, who had now matured into rather a wild but beautiful and animated creature. His first business therefore was to make himself so agreeable that she should regard him as a brother, and thus free her from those little rigid forms which mark the strangers from the well-acquainted; and accordingly he used all the fascination in his power, and was unremitting in those little nothings which hardly come within the scope of *attentions*, but which make more progress towards a young

heart than half the fine speeches and fulsome compliments with which the self-sufficient lover attempts to force his way to the citadel.

Unused to the rapidity of travelling, Amelia became very excited, and laughed and talked in the most animated manner. Neither was Douglass much behind her in the lively remarks : he had caught the enthusiasm from her, and he soon grew from the first formality to the familiar and the easy.

Long before they had arrived at Rochester, he had called her his own sister. Douglass soon found Amelia a most agreeable companion : she was romantic in her notions, and had read almost every novel which had issued from the press for the last three years. She was indebted to Mr. Walton's maid for this supply of intellectual food ; for otherwise, no book of that demoralising order ever entered the house of her religious sister. Indeed, so far did she carry her scruples upon this point, that a Shakspeare was voted improper, and history itself hardly reckoned as worth reading. ' Sherlock upon Death'—' Watts's Serious Call'—

‘ Baxter’s Shove’ — ‘ Crumbs of Comfort’ — ‘ Penitent Sinner’ — ‘ Is it well with You ?’ and fifty thousand tracts, all very religious, and all very proper, were to be found in every room of the house. On Sundays they had cold-meat dinner, in order that the cook might go to meeting ; and no work or labour was done within the range of Mr. Walton’s government.

To read a newspaper was inevitable destruction, and to play sacred music on the piano was more than doubtful. The consequence was, that idleness tended to vice : the servants, on the plea of going to meeting, went to the Park ; and the straight-haired, pomatum-stinking footman doffed his livery, and assuming the frizzle head of a beau and the sprightliness of a sinner, escorted Mary Scullery in her evening rambles, and became so intimate with that methodistical young lady, that it was found quite necessary, although by no means convenient, to marry them.

Mrs. Walton once allowed her maid to remain without medical assistance because she thought it sinful to call in a physician of a

Sunday ; and Mr. Walton nearly died of epilepsy, because his wife thought it encouraging sin to buy ether on the Sabbath from the shop of the neighbouring apothecary. Amelia related these little anecdotes with a peculiar liveliness, and she said she felt like a bird released from its cage and allowed to flutter in freedom.

“ And, Amelia,” he began, “ now that I have charge of your sweet self, I should like to know how that little heart of yours beats, or if it is the property of some lucky fellow who has captivated it.”

“ Indeed,” she replied, “ my heart is my own. One might have died at my sister’s without seeing a human face but that of one Methodist parson, who did pay me great attention ; but I discountenanced him. I could not bear his duplicity, and his sanctity left him whenever my sister left the room.”

“ Then I must look after you sharper, my pretty Amelia ; for in Paris the French whisper love with more assurance than a Methodist parson in England ; and you English girls

always imagine the compliment sweeter because it is paid in a foreign language : not unlike the sailor, who always thinks his prize-money greater when paid in Spanish dollars."

" But ladies do not measure love by the compliments ; and sailors are none the richer in reality for the heavy coin they covet ; so you are wrong, sir, in both your premises and conclusion."

" I see very well what will be the conclusion of your argument, pretty Amelia ; but I am now your guardian and your protector, and you will not marry without my consent."

" Oh ! certainly not," she replied ; and then taking some work from her reticule, she stitched with great eagerness as she said, " Ah ! I see I am never to be married, for you will never give your consent. I suppose I am to die an old maid, and drive asses,—and have a cat and a teapot."

" About the consent you are half right, for I never shall be able to part with you. The fact is, I begin to think I shall love you too much myself."

“ There now, you sinner !” she replied ; “ you warned me against the French compliments, and you are telling me in plain English that you love me. Well, well, I’ll be revenged if you do not give your consent ; for I’ll tell your pretty little wife what a flirt you are, Master Robert.”

“ Don’t you do any such thing, Amelia ; or you will make her jealous, and I shall lose you.”

“ Ah ! then,” she replied, “ perhaps I may use a little *discretion*, and allow you to be happy.”

“ Very well, Amelia ; and you shall have a husband when you are tired of me for a friend.”

“ Dear me !” she replied, “ I always thought they were very different things ;” and she worked away.

In this manner, and keeping up a light frivolous conversation, they jumbled through Canterbury, and by nine in the evening were snugly housed at Payne’s hotel. The next morning they crossed to Boulogne, and proceeded to

the Hotel de Londres. Douglass thought Amelia would go mad with the novelty of the scene: she could not resist the temptation to laugh, and she quizzed every man, woman, and child who passed. She herself attracted much attention; for there was a freshness about her person which is rarely equalled, and a grace in her walk which could never be surpassed. She overheard the many expressions of rapture as the strangers, talking purposely loud that she might overhear it, pronounced her a real Venus—an exquisite beauty.

Douglass soon perceived that Amelia's heart would not prove a strong citadel against the invasion of the female's tyrant; and he knew exactly in what manner a Frenchman makes his approaches, and how much he is indebted to his impudence for his ultimate success. She had one safeguard—and a great one it is on the Continent: *she had no money*. Those who have lived long in Paris are quite aware how little real attention an Englishwoman receives from this gallant nation providing she is *not* married, and has no allurements but her personal charms.

It is within memory that a certain gentleman passing himself as a prince, he having about as much right to the title as the Pope has to the Viceroyship of Ireland, had a sister, whom he introduced to a family, one of the daughters of which he pretended very seriously to admire: she had a fair fortune. Some one, however, hinted to his highness that the younger sister would have the most, and his love was immediately suspended until the important news was ascertained. The little princess was the person chosen to sound the delicate ground; and one day, when alone with the younger sister, she did not make a regular approach, but she assaulted at once and boldly put the question, asking thus:—"Which will have the most money—you or your sister?" The young lady, then only fifteen, but clever enough, answered, "I will tell you truly if you will tell me with equal truth *why* you ask the question."—"Certainly," replied the princess: "it is for the information of my brother, who says, if *you* have most money, he will marry you."—"Indeed, An-

nette,” replied the English girl, “he is too kind: tell him that my sister will have the most money, and will be the greatest fool of the two if she marries such a mercenary *prince*!” His highness was forbid the house, and thus another English girl was rescued from foreign claws.

Douglass hired a French rattletrap, and the next day proceeded to Abbeville, the day following to Beauvais, and the third evening they were in Paris. Douglass rushed into Julia’s arms,—he embraced his child now perfectly restored to health,—and he introduced his charge, having previously, when in England, written to say that she was to be his companion.

“Thank Heaven you are returned at last, Robert! Oh! how long—how miserably long has the fourteen days appeared since you left me! I have counted the moments—I have watched the close of each day with rapture since the flight of time thus shortened our separation; but here you are, and all my sorrows forgotten. For you, Miss Stanhope, I have prepared a room; you are welcome, and I shall be

happier now I have a companion,—for that truant Robert is not worthy of the name.”

Amelia seemed at once to cling to Julia as a friend ; an intimacy was established in a moment, and they all sat down to dinner, rather tired, but excessively happy.

“ Do you know, Robert,” said Julia, “ that I am about to give you some good advice, and that is, never to leave a young and pretty wife like myself in such a place as this without a protector. I have had visits from half the nobility—or rather, might have had, for they called incessantly, and I was ultimately obliged to place myself under the protection of your friend and old schoolfellow Walsingham. He has been unremitting in his kindness, and has been daily here to inquire when you were expected, and to offer his services to me.”

Douglass knew the reason very well which had induced his friend to be so anxious about his arrival : he owed him some money, and his bills had become due ; he felt for his respectability, and for his losses, no doubt. “ Indeed,”

replied Douglass, "I am glad to hear it : when was he here last?"

"This morning ; and he seemed really glad when I told him you would be in Paris to-day. He promised to call to-morrow, and refused my invitation for this evening on the plea of your being fatigued.—Such a nice man, Amelia ! At first I disliked him ; but his attention during Robert's absence overcame my prejudice. He is so clever and shrewd !—besides which, he is an old acquaintance of Robert's, and one of the only men we know ; for, owing to Houghton's indisposition, we have lived quite retired. He will make a charming companion for you : he speaks French beautifully, and is, by his own description, quite a walking guide for Paris.—Now tell me, Robert, how is my mother, and all our friends and relations?"

Douglass briefly narrated, for he felt little inclined to talk, the marriage of her mother, the awful and serious change of Louisa, and the reports concerning Margaret.

"Oh," she continued, "I have received a

letter from Margaret. She intends coming to Paris in three months' time : her husband will then have some few months leave, and she is desirous of seeing how we 'get along', as the Americans say ; for she declares, that never was there a husband so good as Charles Stanhope."

"He is a dear, kind, good, affectionate *brother* as ever lived," Amelia remarked, "and promises to be as good a husband, and would be as kind and as indulgent a parent."

"Well done, Amelia !" said Douglass ; "Charles's trumpeter is not dead. I wish I had some one to blow mine for me half as well. Now, tell us about the Methodist parson."

"Not I, indeed," replied the sprightly girl ; "he is too *serious* for me. He may be a very good man ; but I wish he were less at my sister's, and more in his pulpit. He preaches remarkably well ; but he is very indifferent, I am sure, in his practice. If I am to fall in love, I would rather fall in love with Mr. Walsingham, solely because he is the *friend* of Robert."

Douglass gave a deep sigh ; he saw all the mischief which might fall upon them, and he felt that now Walsingham *would be* his companion even if he did not wish it. The first falsehood had paved the way for the rest, and it required his utmost effort of memory not to tell another whenever a question was asked him. So true it is, that one lie is the preface to another.

“ I shall never give my consent, Amelia,” he said, smiling. “ You know the terms.”

“ Oh yes,” she replied, whilst a light blush played for a minute on her cheeks, “ I remember the agreement, and likewise your remark ; but as I have a regard for myself and my happiness, as well as for your own, I shall not betray it. I’m very tired, and I’m off to bed. Good night !”

CHAPTER VI.

DOUGLASS's first endeavour when left alone with Julia was to discover, if possible, how far the many conversations she had exchanged with Walsingham had been to his prejudice ; for had he betrayed the secret of his gambling, the extent of his losses, his frequent attendance at the Salon, and his present debts, he knew that all his happiness was at an end : Julia would have discovered the frequent falsehoods, and consequently he never should have been credited even by his own wife. He soon perceived from the cross examination that Walsingham had told sufficient to excite curiosity without having satisfied it ; at the same time that he had considerably gained in his wife's estimation. He had been so attentive during the child's illness, had called every day, had

volunteered his services, and had confessed, when questioned, that he had seen Douglass at the Salon, but that he believed a few pounds would cover his losses. Julia's whole occupation seemed to have been nursing Houghton and pumping Walsingham.

The first hour when alone was in talking over her mother's marriage, for she had received an account herself from the person most interested: then they canvassed the conduct of Louisa, then that of Stanhope, and lastly, as if afraid of coming to the point, and therefore avoiding it as long as possible, they touched upon Verity, his partner, the settlement deed, and other minor questions. Douglass was now deep in lying; he had broken the ice, and cared not how much more he added to the account.

"The deed," he replied, "was not finished when I left town; but instructions had been left with Honor to complete and send it over for signature. Longdale was in high perfection, and the monument to Houghton had been duly regarded." This little heap of falsehoods

seemed greatly to restore Julia to the peace she had known before ; he promised faithfully not to risk any further sum to recover the *little* he had lost, and they fell asleep, one dreaming of future felicity, and the other of the round table, green-covered lamp, croupiers, dice, fortune, and throwing in ten mains, or the colour running for fourteen times.

Breakfast was scarcely finished, and Amelia and Douglass in comfortable conversation, when the servant announced Mr. Walsingham ; and before Douglass could give directions for showing him into another room, the thin gentleman came like a shadow of the thin servant, and shook hands with Douglass with great cordiality. On seeing Amelia, whom he had at first taken for Julia, his countenance became suddenly as pale as the dead, and he ejaculated “ Miss Stanhope ! ” with the most evident surprise. Douglass introduced him immediately ; but his bow was that of timidity—his whole manner was more like a frightened boy than a man of the world, and it was some

time before he recovered himself: but Douglass thought he saw a gleam of inexpressible joy come over his countenance when, in addressing Miss Stanhope; he said, “*Amelia*, will you leave Mr. Walsingham with me for a moment?” He arose and said, “I trust, Miss Stanhope, it will only be for a moment;” whilst *Amelia*, blushing, left the room.

“I am most thankful that you are returned,” began Walsingham; “I have had a world of trouble to pacify your creditors: they have been clamorous, and have united together against you; it was with great difficulty I could keep them from sending a huissier to seize your carriage and other things belonging to you. Your old man, as I call him, spread the report that you had taken refuge in Italy, and that you were separated from your wife. My contradiction, and my daily report that your wife was in Paris, had heard from you, and expected your return, pacified them. I find they hold your acceptances for 8000*l.*, and I hope you are come prepared to

pay them directly : indeed some of them are in the street now, and the sooner you satisfy them the better."

" That I am prepared to do directly," replied Douglass ; " the money is all at Lafitte's, and more than is requisite : but first let me pay you the trifle you lent me ;" and he placed in his hand two bills of a thousand francs each.

" Oh ! this little trifle," replied Walsingham, " does not signify in the least ; and if it is of any service to you, my dear sir, let me entreat you to keep it."

Douglass thanked him for his kindness, and proposed instantly going and arranging the accounts ; to which Walsingham assented ; and before noon that day, Douglass had paid the above amount, and was released from all importunities, and his credit as high as ever.

Walsingham now proposed to pay Mrs. Douglass a congratulatory visit ; and he began by skirmishing before he ventured to say that Amelia was a very fine girl, and that he never remembered being so overcome at first sight by

any person in his life. He thus enticed Douglass to speak of her ; and he fancied that Walsingham had elicited all he required to know,—namely, her connexions and her prospects. Douglass thought he felt an odd convulsive motion of his arm when he referred to Mr. Walton, in whose house, he mentioned, Amelia had resided. He then adverted to the marriage of Charles, and that he was likely to come over for a few months in the spring. When Walsingham heard this, he asked if Mrs. Walton was likely to join the party. When Douglass answered, “Certainly not,” she would not put her foot again in this sink of iniquity, he felt another convulsive squeeze, and he thought his friend increased his pace towards his door.

In the mean time, Amelia had, with all the light feeling of her age, bounded into Julia’s room, and commenced a conversation with her relative to the first impression of Walsingham when he was introduced to her, and the sudden and unexpected ejaculation of her name. “I

am sure, my dear Julia, you must have told him that I was expected, for he knew me immediately."

" Upon my word, my dear Amelia, I never did mention your name to him ; neither did I ever say that you were expected : but you seem as if he had made some impression upon you already. Now don't fall in love, for we know very little about his prospects or his property—and great love and little money never go well together."

" Oh ! love indeed !—why, Julia, you are as bad as your husband ! Every one fancies, because a person comes to Paris, she must necessarily fall in love ; as if Cupid was in the air, and finding it too light to support his weight, came walking into the houses. He certainly did appear very much surprised at seeing me, and, for the first acquaintance, I have no hesitation in saying that I like his appearance."

" Perhaps he is timid before strangers," continued Julia ; " and I suppose he learnt your name from some of the servants, as I take it for granted he did not see ' Stanhope ' written in

your countenance, pretty as it may be ; — and that, my dear Amelia, no one is more ready to allow than myself.”

“ You are a dear good creature, Julia : but really I only asked you because he appeared so confused ; and I expected rather to find a bold than a timid admirer, from all I have heard of the Parisians. I wonder if Robert will ask him to dinner ;—not that I care about it, but I should like to see him again.”

“ Depend upon it you will see enough of him ; for I flatter myself he is rather struck with my beauty,—and so do not imagine that you are to make all the conquest.—Oh ! here is Houghton, looking rosy and lovely.”

“ Nurse !—nurse !” said Amelia, springing towards her,—“ let me have him ! There, Julia, see how fond he is of me ! he does not cry a bit, pretty little chubby darling !” and she kissed him over and over again. “ How I like children ! There you go ! up, up, up !” she continued as she threw the child in the air. “ Dear little cherub, what a comfort you must be to your parents !”

“ I begin to doubt that,” replied Julia, “ for I am sure I felt more anguish when the child was sick than I ever felt pleasure when it was well ; for I thought how wretchedly miserable I should be if it were taken from me. Oh ! how long did I remain, my eyes fixed upon the child ! I could not sleep—I knew no comfort—I dreaded every change. But now that I see it well and likely to continue so, although thankful to God for his great goodness, yet I do not know an equal pleasure to the extreme pain I suffered. We were all alone ; Robert was in London, and I had only the child and the doctor to comfort me.”

“ Never mind, Julia ; I shall be nurse to the child, and save your arms. Since Louisa has had a family, I think she is much happier.”

“ Much happier !” interrupted Julia ; “ why, are they not as happy as the day is long ? I heard from Robert that they lived like turtle-doves, and scarcely ever were separated for a moment. Is he mistaken ?”

“ A little,” replied Amelia. “ For about a

year after their marriage they went on uncommonly well." ("Hush ! Houghton, hush !" she said, as she rocked the child in her arms.) " But no sooner did they get acquainted with a Mr. Cantall, than a visible change took place. Cantall was a good-looking man, and would have been better-looking had he not stuck his hair in straight lines over his head. He possessed a musical voice, and was apparently so good, so righteous, that Louisa was always glad when he called. By degrees he became almost an inmate in the house. A more than usual sanctity soon was visible ; and his brotherly love increased at a wonderful pace. About this time I came to the house on a visit to my sister ; and I soon found that I was destined to be annoyed by his continual endeavours to convert me. He spoke of sisterly affection : as he read some tracts, with which he always crammed his pockets, I often detected his eyes roving towards me ; and whenever any passage was particularly tender, that passage was invariably directed to me. Walton had caught the enthusiastic ravings of this wretched crea-

ture, and began, from being open and unreserved, to become suspicious and scrupulous. He changed his lawyer because he went to the races, and placed his affairs in the hands of another, who absconded with some of his money about a fortnight afterwards. This made him morose, and soured his temper. His suspicions next fell upon Cantall, who was now almost domiciled in the house : hence a little difference began with Louisa, which their austerity, so far from removing, has seriously increased. I, however, have been the cause of ejecting him from the house ; for one day, when I was endeavouring to please him by reading one of his tracts, he approached nearer and nearer my chair, until I felt his arm encircle my waist, and before I could escape he kissed me. I flew out of the room to Mr. Walton, who, glad enough to get any opportunity of being rid of this hypocrite, desired him to take up his bed and walk, and never more to enter his abode. The vile fellow, looking at me, and saying with the most demure look, ‘ Peace be with you and in this house !’ walked off—and, I hope, for ever.”

“ And Louisa,” interrupted Julia, “ what did she say to this ?”

“ She felt it much, because she always thought him so good a man, and one who was, as he represented himself, a labourer in the vineyard: she declared that all his ways ‘ were ways of righteousness, and all his paths were peace ;’ but one thing is quite certain,—namely, that Walton is not so gay or so happy as he was, and that Louisa has become downcast and sad. I dare say, if Robert had not taken compassion on me, my hair would never have curled again !”

“ You are a funny girl, Amelia ! But I see Houghton has fallen asleep, and you have proved yourself a good nurse, so place the baby in the cradle, and let us see if Robert has returned home. But don’t you fancy that Mr. Walsingham will admire you :—no, no ; I am to make new conquests, although I am a wife and mother.”

The very marked manner which was manifested when the ladies entered the room where Robert and Walsingham were seated, must

have convinced Julia that Walsingham was much taken with the fine features of Amelia. She was of moderate stature; her hair raven black—a most determined jet; her eyebrows arched a little, and joined; her eyes, shaded by the long lashes, were dark and clear; whilst the upper lip had a peculiar tendency to pout, as if the tender part grew more than usual over the skin of the face: her features were beautifully regular, and she wore her hair in the Grecian style. To Douglass's eyes her figure was perfect; but Julia, when she became jealous, discovered that her shoulders were too high, her feet too large, her waist too small, and her fingers too long.

The conversation began in that usual manner so peculiar to English people: we are more indebted to a snuff-box and the clouds for a commencement than any other nation in existence. This prelude having been duly played without any variations, Amelia commenced by saying that she hoped we were not condemned to be moped in this gilded prison, either by day or by night; that she had heard of

the gay doings of this metropolis. “And, Mr. Walsingham,” she added, “I shall enlist you in our service, and expect you will be a true and faithful knight.”

“You may depend upon my utmost exertions, Miss Stanhope,” he replied: “it would be quite a sufficient inducement to be allowed a participation in your society; and I verily believe that had I been Adam in Paradise with you, I should have tasted the forbidden fruit if you had offered it.”

“Bravo, Mr. Walsingham!” said the lively girl. “You seem to have lived long enough in Paris to have caught the manners and customs of the nation.”

“Long enough, at any rate,” replied Walsingham, “to have learned to admire beauty, youth, and sprightliness, when they are concentrated in one fair female.”

“There, Julia!” replied Amelia, “that must have been meant for you; for I never could get a compliment paid me, excepting by some old married man like Robert, or some *serious* gentleman like Cantall.”

“ You are in the same position as heretofore,” said Walsingham, “ for I never pay a compliment.”

“ And I am quite certain she never deserves one,” replied Julia.—“ But a truce to this. I for one certainly feel inclined to see all that Paris can show ; and I propose, since good fortune has made us acquainted with Mr. Walsingham, that he enacts master of the ceremonies. The change will benefit me ; and now, thank Heaven ! as we are all well in spirits and health, I am resolved to play the truant a little myself.”

“ Well, Walsingham,” Douglass said, “ we are under your orders, and to you I confide the ladies,—that is, as far as sight-seeing goes ; but after your flattering speeches, I must enact guardian.”

“ Oh, thank you, Robert !” replied Amelia — “ I am to be under your surveillance, am I ? then see what a pretty dance I will lead you ! But come, Julia, let us put on our bonnets :” and very shortly afterwards both the ladies returned.

In their absence, however, Douglass confided his intentions to Walsingham. “Walsingham,” he began, “I fear this lively little romp will be a great bar to my recovering my losses ; for it will be impossible to get out without detection, and I cannot leave them alone of an evening.”

“Really,” replied Walsingham, “I have thought much of your situation, and am now of opinion that the first loss is the least. Perhaps, if you followed up your system, you might ultimately succeed ; but I think that you, as a married man with a family, would act more prudently by abstaining from the Salon. But if you are determined to persevere—which I most strenuously oppose—it is as easily done before dinner as afterwards : any time after three o’clock Frascati’s is open, and by that hour we can always have managed to have fatigued the ladies.—But mind, I recommend your not playing at all.”

“Why, it was but the other day you spoke of the timid men as the only losers, and prompted me to play continually—nay, desperately ;

and now you change like the wind, and are dead against it !”

“ I did not know so much of your family then as I do now. Your wife evidently suspects you of a great desire to play ; she mentioned to me the manner in which you became possessed of your fortune, and numerous sayings of brown fortune-tellers, by which you are destined to lose it. Now it is obvious you have enough to be happy and comfortable, and you will only ruin your domestic felicity and your own individual peace of mind by following up the blow.”

“ It is no use—I must play,” replied Douglass. “ I want the excitement ; everything appears dull without it : and I swear I would rather play, if I played to a certain loss, than not play at all !”

“ Oh ! my good friend ! if it is the excitement of play you require, I can always sacrifice a little time to a game or two of *écarté*, in which the ladies may join. We can play as high as you like ; and I should always understand you, if in touching one ring on your fin-

ger you intended to bet ten Napoleons, in touching the second fifty, the third one hundred ; and my scratching my ear would be the answer that I took the bet ; whereas my omitting to do that, would be an answer in the negative. When you were in, the plan would answer just as well. The game is more amusing, as one has the satisfaction of dealing the cards and playing them ; whereas at rouge-et-noir you only see the fun, and mostly experience the mortification of seeing your money swept away without remorse."

" I do not altogether," replied Douglass, " dislike this proposition. To be sure, there is one drawback : I do not know the game ; and I am quite certain that neither of the ladies are more informed than myself."

" I can teach you," replied Walsingham, " in a moment : it is the easiest game ever played, and after dinner this evening I will soon make you understand it thoroughly."

They now sallied out ; the ladies walking together ; Walsingham supporting Amelia on the right, and Douglass taking the side nearest

Julia. Their first visit was to the Louvre ; and in passing, as they did, by the Rue Castiglione, through the Tuilleries, Douglass felt rather astonished at the number of people, and some of them of the most questionable appearance, who bowed to Walsingham. To those many questions of Amelia as to who they were, she received for answer, that they were noblemen ruined by extravagance, and almost dependant upon public charity. This ragamuffin was the Marquis de Châteauville ; another thin squalid apology for a man, was the Vicomte de St. Léon ; and a third, infinitely more like a spy of the police than a nobleman, was M. le Duc d'Orangeville. "Changes of government," he added, "are no friends to prosperity ; and when the political pot boils, the skum swims. During Napoleon's time, these were great men ; now, under Charles, they are nothing. These poor fellows," he added, "are upon my pauper list, and I almost ruin myself by my charity : but *now*, Miss Stanhope," he continued, "I think it quite right to begin with charity at home, and take care of myself."

They entered the Louvre, and for some time kept together, but alternately separated; for whilst Julia and Douglass were gazing with rapture on the beautiful picture of the Decapitation of Lady Jane Grey, Amelia and Walsingham had walked up the long gallery, and were poring over the Death of Endymion. Walsingham had offered his arm; and the splendid appearance of Amelia—for she really was beautiful and lively—attracted considerable attention.

Walsingham seemed well acquainted with the pictures and their various masters; he carried with him a catalogue to which he rarely referred, and was never deficient in an answer when Amelia suggested a question. It was very evident that he had been much smitten with her; and the strange confusion at the first interview quite convinced Douglass that he should have to use all his guardianship to prevent a too hasty ebullition of feeling.

“One might linger here for ever,” said Amelia as they joined the other party, “and never be satisfied: and Mr. Walsingham is so kind,

so clever,—he knows all the painters of the different pictures, and has been enchanting me with his vivid descriptions.”

“It certainly is the most delightful gallery I ever saw,” continued Julia; “and I intend to make this my daily resort.—But we appear to be nearly the only persons left.”

“They close it at a certain hour,” replied Walsingham; “and that sad hour is arrived, I fear, for these guardians of the treasures seem clearing the gallery. It is but another pleasure deferred,” he continued as he looked with tenderness on Amelia. “But we must vary the scene, and visit the different lions, returning occasionally to this; for wheresoever we may go, this, after all, is the most agreeable sight and lounge in Paris.—By the bye, I have discovered a great likeness in one of the portraits to Miss Stanhope: it is in the picture further down, of Venus playing with Cupid.”

“Oh, nonsense,” replied Douglass; “you will make the girl as vain as a peacock.”

“I would rather see her,” he replied, “like the birds of Venus, than the gaudy companion of Juno.”

“I shall clip your wings, Amelia,” said Douglass, “be you dove or peacock, or this flatterer will turn your brain.”

“If you attempt to interfere with my compliments,” replied Amelia, “I shall turn my back upon you.”

They returned to the hotel to dinner. Walsingham was of the party, for Douglass felt himself under some obligations to him for having interfered in his behalf during his absence. Julia admired him the more he became her companion; and Amelia was certainly rather taken with his appearance and manner. The dinner was ended—the wine removed—when Walsingham thus introduced a subject which ultimately shook the pretty Julia’s confidence in her most devoted husband.

“As you left the occupation of your leisure time to me,” he began, “I have procured tickets for a masquerade ball.”

“Oh, how delightful !” interrupted Amelia.

“It is to take place this day fortnight, at the Cercle des Etrangers; and I need hardly say that every lady must be masked, although it is

optional with us to be so or not. At this masquerade will be the *élite* of Paris. There will be dancing, perhaps, by the artistes of the opera ; and at two o'clock there will be a grand supper. I think both the ladies will be satisfied with this my first project ; and if not inclined to go, the tickets are easily returned."

"Is it a public masquerade?" asked Julia.

"Certainly not," replied Walsingham ; "and great interest is required to procure admission."

"Oh, Julia, we will go ! Come, there is a dear creature ! say yes, and thank Mr. Walsingham for his kindness and attention."

"That I am ready to do, and to express the obligation under which he has laid us. I shall certainly not object to this, more especially as I see Amelia has set her heart upon seeing this novelty, to her."

"I think," added Douglass, "there can be no objection, excepting in the eyes of Amelia's lover, Mr. Cantall. My pretty Venus, cannot you despatch one of your doves to London, and tell your romantic admirer of this masquerade, at which he might meet you. Come, don't

pout like a pigeon ! it would be a feather in any woman's cap to catch Cantall."

"Now, Robert," said the gay girl, "I will ask your consent when you least expect it ; and let me tell you, that, like the old fable, you have shot at a pigeon and killed a crow."

"—The crow being Cantall, I hope," said Walsingham.

"Why, he is as black as one," replied Douglass ;—"at least, so Amelia says."

"I wish I had a piano here," interrupted Amelia, "if merely to drown your tell-tale voice, you miserable babbler !"

"Let us play at cards," said Douglass ; "and that will show, my pretty *Venus*, that you have no *dealings* with the Methodists."

"And I will volunteer to teach you *écarté*," said Walsingham : "it is a game every one must know in Paris, for you are obliged frequently to play, and this is the fashionable amusement. Do you know it ?" he continued, addressing Douglass.

He replied in the negative, but ringing the bell, ordered the cards.

It was agreed that Walsingham should give the lesson to Amelia ; and Douglass soon found he was to pay for it. The playing of five cards seemed so obviously simple, that even Julia, who had never played a card in her life, soon took the chair and won a game of Walsingham ; the latter declaring it a game adapted to the meanest capacity, at which the novice was nearly on a par with the experienced. Douglass watched it narrowly, and believing him, soon opposed him, and met with a serious opposition.

Time, and paying for experience, has since taught him that there is no game on the cards more difficult to play than *écarté*. There are about a hundred intricacies in the game ; and, simple as it appears, no game requires more study. Those who have seen the celebrated German Jew transferring the wealth of others to his own pockets by the dexterous management of these five pieces of painted pasteboard, giving one game out of five, and invariably winning, are aware that some excellence is requisite to secure success : and those who have seen the king turned up as if by magic, when one party

happen to be four, have, until they found out that Fortune had nothing to do with it, uttered maledictions on the fickle goddess, and believed themselves unfortunate men. In another place may be detailed the numerous ways by which the unwary are pillaged ; at present let it suffice to say, that Douglass played long with Walsingham that evening, and, owing to the ring system they had agreed upon before, he found himself very *unfortunate* indeed, and a loser of five hundred pounds.

CHAPTER VII.

WE left Stanhope and his handsome wife comfortably settled in country quarters ;—Stanhope, warm, affectionate, and fond ; his wife, cool, calculating, and indifferent. She had every one of the sex's inherent failings which the genius of Hindostan pronounces as belonging to woman ; and she had no redeeming qualities save those of virtue and equality of temper. For the first she was indebted to her icicle composition ; to the latter, to the goodness of Stanhope, who never allowed it to be ruffled for a second.

They had passed their lives in the good old automaton fashion of soldiers quartered in a country village. They rose at stated times ; ate at stated times ; walked at stated times ; slept at stated times ;—and so passed life, with-

out any excitement to vary it. The new novels were a year old ; and the papers and magazines arrived when they had outlived their circulation and their novelty. It is no wonder, then, that the arrival of a letter from Paris gave a new turn to their ideas. That letter was from Julia, and fixed in Stanhope's mind the resolution of passing some time in Paris when his leave should commence, and which would be about a month after the masquerade ball mentioned in the last chapter. Even the idea of seeing strange places failed to excite Margaret.

"Well, Margaret," said Stanhope, after reading the letter, "I am resolved to give you a run to Paris : you will see your old sweetheart Robert, and compare happiness with Julia."

"It is a consummate annoyance moving at all, Charles, when we are so quiet and so comfortable here."

"But the change, Margaret, will do you a world of good : besides which, the life we lead is so dull, and so monotonous, that we shall scarcely know how to behave ourselves when we get

into society. We are at least a year behind our friends the Waltons, for we have not seen a political caricature or even read of the last fashion: and has the novelty (I thought that always was uppermost in a female's mind) no charms for you?—is it possible that you can be contented in such a hole as this?”

“Before this morning and the receipt of Julia's letter, Charles, you were always preaching the necessity of contentment, until you made me feel happy where I am. Now you tell me I am to seek excitement in novelty. I am quite contented here; and the very idea of packing up to go such a distance at such a season of the year would kill me with apprehension. As to seeing Julia and Robert, there can be no *necessity* for that: Julia says she is well, and Robert, we know, was in London the other day. I am quite satisfied with their account of themselves, and I would rather stay than go.”

“Well, well, we will talk of that another time; but really the sameness of the life we lead quite destroys me. Our utmost intelligence

consists in some scandal, as disgusting as it is false. The only congregation of people we get is in the church and the churchyard; the only virtues we see recorded are engraven on the tomb-stones; and the public is concentrated in the town-crier. His villanous bell is the only music of the village; and head-quarters are so far off, that we never see a uniform excepting on the parish beadle. By heavens! we are never lucky enough to see Punch or the children on stilts; and as for society, we cannot even get a hint from that of 'Useful Knowledge,' or the 'Suppression of Vice.' "

"I am sure," drawled out Margaret, "I don't want to hear from either one or the other."

"Well, Margaret, I wish I had your placidity of temper, and your easiness in being pleased; there must be some hidden virtue in the hemming of a handkerchief, which is unknown to man: you seem to me to be happy without ambition, and contented without either a change of books or situation. Now, although I am independent of any one for my amusements, and

since I can pore over a book for hours, I may say I am contented ; yet I think the contentment would be enhanced by an occasional change of scenery : they say fowls become blind on board a ship from the eternal sameness, and I should not wonder if my visual organs showed me nothing but yonder green gate, that old oak, and the town-crier.—Oh, here comes that old bore Simpson !—pray what is he always whispering to you ?”

“ Oh, some nonsense about love, and his admiration about my beauty,” said Margaret.

“ The devil he is !” replied Stanhope with some surprise ; “ and I suppose he occasionally kisses your hand ?”

“ Sometimes he does,” replied the Snow-drop ; “ and once he put his hand round my waist and——”

“ Kissed your lips,” interrupted Stanhope, his eyes lighting up with jealousy and suspicion.

“ Yes,” continued Margaret, “ but I pushed him away, and told him I did not like it, and he has not done it again—only twice : I cannot find out the pleasure of kissing and kissing.”

“ Tell Mr. Simpson we are not at home, John ; and take care you never let him in here again, or you will lose your place. Mind what I say, John,—I don’t want his society.”

“ That is strange !” replied Margaret. “ You just now said you wanted more society ; and now you are lessening the number by the only agreeable person in the whole village—the only person who comes and sits by me, who tells me the news, and who is so kind and so attentive, and who—”

“ Kisses your hand, and then encircles your waist, and then kisses your lips, and then—”

“ What then ?” said Margaret, more excited than she had ever been before.

“ *Then* you wonder,” continued Stanhope, “ that I beg he will make his visits less frequent, or forego them altogether. Pretty Margaret, I am the only person who ought to be so favoured, and I cannot bear that any others should venture thus far upon my preserves. He is a poacher, and wants to make game of you ; but he shall find that it is rather dangerous shooting without a license.—Come, child, do

drop that poor old patchwork chair; get on your habit, and we will ride for an hour or two."

"Very well, Charles, my dear; but I cannot see the amusement of riding up and down a parcel of lanes."

"Very true, my love. In summer, and in hot weather, a ride up narrow lanes with a tight hat, an impatient horse, a few insects in your eyes, and an unexpected turnpike to pay of the toll of one penny, leaving you, like a Santa Martha musician, to rattle your coppers as you ride, and carry a weight which would lose a jockey a race;—that is not either pleasant or agreeable. But it happens to be winter. Come, come, the cold air will do you good: you want exciting—you want change of scene."

The horses were brought; Margaret was placed on her saddle. Her beautiful figure would have arrested the eyes of any London admirer, for she was beyond all criticism; and had her heart been capable of warmth, she would have been a prize rarely the lot of mortals. But she was as insensible to passion as a statue, and

now had become indolent from long inactivity. Even Stanhope had collected a little rust on the wheels of life ; but whenever he was on horseback, his usual sprightliness returned, his buoyant spirits effervesced, and he was more like a schoolboy than a married man *without* a family.

“ Now then, Margaret, my child, come, away we go !” and starting off his own horse, Margaret’s followed at a brisk pace, whilst Charles, very unlike the attentive lover, led the way, hollowing and shouting like a madman.

The flush on her cheek, from the exercise and the cold, made Margaret’s beautiful features still more beautiful ; and when Stanhope reined in his horse, he could not help bursting into admiration at the sight. “ Margaret,” he said, “ I have enticed you into this ride in order to enable you to do a good and a charitable action ; and the benefits the rich bestow are always more valued when the hand of beauty dispenses the charity. Here is what I wish you to give to poor old Jenkins, whose cottage was burnt the other night, and whose poor child

suffered so much from the fire and the bruises, that its poor little life is in danger. I know you rejoice at this opportunity of distributing a little of what we have to those who are in distress ; and you require not the argument which many use, whereby they seem more inclined to cover a multitude of sins, than to think of the real blessing they thus bestow. You must say something kind to the old man, and ask to see his child."

" Really it is very cold, Charles," replied Margaret : " can't we send the money ?"

" You might send the money, certainly," replied Charles rather quickly ; " but then the object would be defeated—nothing tends more to alleviate distress than to see the eye of beauty moistening at the sad recital. No, no ; we are not more than three miles distant ; and the very circumstance of your riding so far in such cold weather, will doubly enhance the value of the gift.—Come—forward."

Both horses pattered along the lanes. The rosy flush of health was in their cheeks ; the animation of an intelligent mind sparkled in the

quick eye of Stanhope, and as he cantered by the side of his beautiful wife, he occasionally prepared her for the scene.

“ You must expect to see a sad sight,” he resumed. “ Poor old Jenkins has lost his all, and his wife is old and unable to work : a heartless villain has availed himself of the old man’s poverty to entice his eldest daughter from him, nine months since ; and this, added to his infirmities, the fire, his wife’s sorrows, and his youngest child’s indisposition, has bowed him to the dust. I fear you will have occasion to summon all your energy of mind ; for a greater picture of distress one can scarcely imagine, and your heart is so good that you must poignantly feel for the miseries of your fellow-creatures.”

No gentle squeeze of the hand thanked him for his kindness or his feeling, no eye sparkling with moisture confessed how much she felt even at the preparation for woe ; but she merely said that “ she wished she were back again, for the distance seemed great in such cold weather ; and that really she could see no difference between giving or sending the money.”

“It will teach us to be contented with our lot in life,” continued Stanhope ; “and you will see with what satisfaction you will remember this ride. Poor old fellow, after toiling up the hill as he has done, to find himself at the end of sixty years of struggling just where he began—in all probability worse, for he has still four children and a decrepit wife to provide for ! See, Margaret, here is the place where the poor old fellow’s cottage stood, and now not a vestige of it is left ; and observe where the walk nicely trimmed with box still points out the way to that black patch on which formerly stood his home. Many and many’s the time has the poor fellow run to welcome his children, as they came bounding along the path to meet him on his return from his daily labours, to receive his welcome kiss, to——”

“Dear, dear Charles, what a pretty bird that is sitting on that bush to the right !—do look !”

“It is a robin,” replied Stanhope ; and looking with a mixture of surprise and displeasure at his wife, he urged his horse on, and they

shortly arrived at the door of the hut where the unfortunate man resided.

“Here, my lad,” said Charles, “hold these horses, and walk them gently about,” addressing a lad of about fourteen years old; “and take care not to let them catch cold.—Come, Margaret,” and he assisted his wife to dismount; “now don’t let your feelings overcome you, but nerve yourself up to see the wretchedness, to speak kindly, to appear to share their misfortunes.”

They entered the hut. In an old chair, apparently too fragile to bear her weight, sat the old woman: she was spinning: but the vacancy of her eye soon betrayed that her misfortunes had pressed more heavily upon her than even Stanhope had imagined. Jenkins was seated near a small round deal table, on which was a Bible; and in a corner of the room were two children about the ages of ten and eleven, playing with a heap of shells, and prattling away quite unconscious of their misery. “Jenkins,” said Stanhope,—(the old man stood upright and smoothed down his hair as he made a bow to

his visitor,)—"I am come with my wife to inquire after you and your family, and to give you that assistance which I hope will make you a little more comfortable than at present." As he said this, Stanhope looked round the room, and certainly saw no articles of luxury by which he could have inferred that the family knew the blessings of comfort. The hut only contained one room; and in that one room the children and the parents were sheltered, fed, and slept.

Jenkins bowed again to Margaret, and shook his head, indicating that no human power could restore him to happiness.

"Come, cheer up, cheer up!" said Stanhope; "you must not allow the calamity to weigh you down; you must struggle, if only for your family's sake, and all your neighbours will cheerfully assist you."

"It's all of no use," said the poor old fellow; "it's here, sir," (putting his hand to his heart,)—"it's here, sir. I've no spirit to do anything. And there's my poor old wife—she's happy now; though, thank God! she's lost all

her remembrance like ; and she sometimes sings and cries all at once. She does not know you are here, but she spins all day without noticing no one ; and when I call her by her name, she looks for all the world like one of the people they calls idiots. I've seen her laugh by the hour : and when she eats, it's not like a Christian ; she snatches it all—ay, even from her children." Here poor old Jenkins turned away and wiped his eyes ; then he continued : " But I thank you, sir, and you, pretty madam, for coming to see the old and the distressed ; and God take you under his precious protection for it !"

Stanhope was deeply affected ; but Margaret seemed more careful to keep her habit from contamination, than in either listening to the old man, or heeding the old woman ; although, now, from curiosity more than feeling, she went near the old dame and looked at her.

" Yes, sir," continued Jenkins ; " I could have borne it all, had my son been back from the Indies, where he went as a sailor ; or if,"

he said, lowering his voice to a whisper, as if fearing his wife might catch the sound, "that villain had not ruined my Susan. He took her from us when her help was most wanted, about eight months since; and now he has sent her back to us quite broken-hearted—so sick she can't move. And this it was that struck *her*" (pointing to his wife). "It was an awful scene, and my old heart nearly burst when I forgave her. *She* lost her reason, like, ever since; and Susan was too overcome to live here, so we put her with Dame Wilkinson, where she lies sick and unable to move."

"My poor fellow," said Stanhope, "you must not dwell upon this sad story so much. Your Susan has returned to you a forgiven daughter, and you must now console and comfort her; she will soon recover her health, and then she will be anxious to repair the injury she has done you, and still be the prop of your old age."

"Thank you very kindly, sir, I'm sure I do, for all you say: but no, no, she never can be to me what she has been! Only think, sir,

what you would suffer if some artful villain had seduced your sister—had left her to shame,” (here Stanhope became dreadfully agitated,) “had ruined her for ever—had made her whole family wretched!—and then,” continued the old man, raising his hands, “to leave her broken-hearted, broken with sickness, without a penny, in the County Hospital!—You tremble, sir, do sit down: why, you look all death like.”

These words recalled the attention of Margaret, who had been busily employed in making a piece of paper, which had been substituted for a pane of glass, a kind of ventilator by loosening the corner. She saw her husband pale—nay, nearly fainting, gasping for breath; the real cause never occurred to her, for she had not paid the least attention to the scene around her, and she attributed it to the confined state of the hut. The door was thrown open, and some water in a cup soon restored him.

“It is nothing,” Stanhope continued, “my dear; I am now quite myself again: the heat of the hut,” (there was hardly fire enough to have warmed a chestnut,) “and my agitation. But go

on, Jenkins, and tell me all about it ;—and cheer up, and take care of your old wife, for she seems very much overcome.”

Here the old woman got up: she was nearly double with age: she hobbled to the window and looked out,—then turned towards her visitors, but she never noticed them; and as she went back to her chair to continue her avocation, she sang in a croaking voice, “ ‘ When black-eyed Susan came on board,—all in the Downs, — quick as lightning on the deck he stands ; ’ ” then joining the ends of the hemp, she continued spinning.

“ It ’s an old song my boy used to sing,” said Jenkins ; “ she remembers a word or two, but it ’s all wrong—I know it well ;—but it ’s Susan she ’s a thinking upon. I ’ll tell you all about it sir. It was about fourteen days ago, that Mr. Williams, our parish parson, came to us, just the same as you might do to-day, and he says, says he, ‘ Jenkins, I have known you these last forty years, and I never heard a word against your character ; you have acted like a good man on every occasion, and now affliction

has come upon you, the hand of friendship will be extended towards you : I have brought you some money I have collected from my neighbours, and this will help you to buy some furniture to put in your new hut.' You see, sir, I lost everything by the fire,—I didn't so much as save a chair ; and if dame's spinning-wheel had not been standing outside the cottage, it would have been lost too. ' Now sit down,' said the parson, ' for I want to speak to you about some other business.' Well, sir, I did as he desired, and he drew a chair close to me, and took my hand. ' Jenkins,' says he, ' is there any sin which you have committed for which you pray God to pardon you ?' and he looked me full in the face.

" ' Many, sir,' says I ; ' for no man can say he has never done nothing wrong : and I hope God will forgive me, as I forgive those who have wronged me.'

" ' That is,' continued the parson, ' spoken like a pious good man, and it will not be unrecorded in heaven. But you have another to forgive, Jenkins : you must,' said he, grasping

my hand, ‘you must see your daughter, and forgive her!’ I shook my head. ‘You must, Jenkins; as you hope for forgiveness of your own sins hereafter, so must you pardon hers. *He* has left her, *he* has deserted her already; and to whom can she apply, if her own parents disregard her prayer?’

“I shook and trembled just as you did just now, sir. I did not know what to say; I couldn’t refuse, and yet I felt very bitter against her. I looked at him stedfastly, and I said, ‘I can do it; though I don’t think dame can: she has cursed her for ever—she has put a mother’s curse upon her, and Susan never can be happy whilst it is so.’

“‘It was wrong, very wrong of her,’ replied the parson: ‘have you not read in that volume, “Judge not, lest ye be judged,” and “Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord?” Go, Jenkins, tell your wife I want to speak to her; and after I have spoken to her for five minutes, do you come in.’

“I called the dame, who was hobbling about after one of the children; and the parson soon

convinced her she had done wrong, and settled that the next day we were both to go to the hospital, and see her, and forgive her. Well, sir, the morning came, and dame was afraid to go. She said that all the people would point at her as the mother of Susan, and that she knew she could not abide it: but I said we had promised the parson, and so on; and at last we set out. I thought I should have died when I saw the building; and dame staggered so, I could scarcely keep her on her legs. There was no one to say a word to us, but one woman, who led us to a small room, and then left us, saying that the parson would be there in a moment.

“ Dame never spoke; but she sobbed bitterly: and whenever I began to comfort her, I somehow couldn't do it neither,—my heart was so full, and I felt so sick, and such a weight upon my breast, that I cried too: and there we were when the parson came in. He goes up to dame, and takes her hand, and tells her to dry her eyes and be a woman; that the act she was about to perform was a duty; that

Susan was bitterly a penitent ; and that there was more joy in heaven over one sinner who repented, than over ninety and nine just men who needed no repentance.

“ ‘ I wanted your daughter to come to you,’ he said ; ‘ but she is too weak, and so you must go to her.’ Dame gets up, and I followed close behind ; but he told me not to come upon the poor girl all at once. Well, we gets to the door, and we sees Susan sitting on the bed, a crying her eyes out, with her handkerchief afore them ; and when dame sees this, she stopped and shook her head, and said she could not speak to Susan. I said, ‘ Go, go, dame, and comfort her poor soul !’ And so she went, just step by step, until she touched her ; and then she fell into her arms, and wept and wept ; and I came directly, and we forgave her. She blessed us ; and I—yes, I, her father, did bless her. And the parson, with the tears a running down his cheeks, tried to bless us too ; but his words were thick, and I couldn’t make them well out.” Here the old man stopped, and

Stanhope added his tears. He turned away his head ; and as he removed his handkerchief, he saw his wife, who had not paid the slightest attention, tickling the children with her horse-whip, and quite in raptures when they scratched without detecting her.

“ Ah, well sir, I ’m sure I thank you for those tears: it was a sight to see; and all dame’s wrath went away directly she touched her own daughter. Susan fell back overcome like, and fainted straight away; and dame, she looked on just as she does now at your wife there. There was no life in her eye—it seemed as if she saw nothing at all; for when Susan was lifted to another bed where there was no pillow, to lay her quite flat and rub her forehead, dame remained looking at the empty bed; and when the parson goes to her, he finds her all wrong here, sir,” pointing to his head: “ she was a looking, and a singing, ‘ Susan ! Susan ! lovely dear ! ’ ”—And here the old woman, as if the words struck upon the nerve of memory, croaked, “ ‘ Susan ! Susan ! lovely dear ! ’ ” and

then looked full in the faces of her husband and Stanhope, with an eye of vacancy shockingly appalling ; then took up another tune—

“ I jolly tar with the trousers on,—
I jolly tar, on board a man-of-war,
Would kiss a pretty girl with the trousers on ! ”

“ Ah ! there it is, sir, again ! that ’s what my boy used to sing to the children to make them dance, and she has not forgot that. She came away with me from the hospital, sir, just as you see her now ; and she never has done nothing since but sing and spin. She can’t recollect her daughter ; for the other day I took her over to the cottage, and she looked at Susan, and Susan cried to see she had made her mother an idiot like : and it was no use for her to take her hand and kiss it, and call ‘ Mother ! mother ! ’ dame did not heed it ; and when looking her afflicted child full in the face, she sang, ‘ My vows shall ever true remain : ’ and Susan, who thought dame meant it for the curse like, fell back again ; and I don’t think she will be alive next Monday, and that day is her nineteenth birthday.—That ’s all of it, sir : and,

God knows, it must be something more than a man to bear all that has happened, and what is to happen ; for I somehow feel every now and then a kind of a tremble, which is not like the old ague I used to have.—But, dear heart ! what is dame about ?”

The old woman had left her spinning, which she did quite mechanically ; the hemp had been all spun, and she was in search of some more, when, in going to the corner where the two children were playing, and Margaret was contributing to amuse them, the dame, somewhat astonished at the odd figure of Margaret, took hold of her arm, and turned her face towards her. Stanhope, who saw it, said quickly, “ Don’t stir, my dear, or you’ll frighten her. She will not hurt you ; speak to her kindly.”

The old woman, after looking some time, seemed endeavouring to remember the features, and for a moment there appeared a ray of intellect in her eye ; and then wildly seizing Margaret by the arm, she said, “ ‘ Susan ! Susan !—’ ” and then relapsing into her former aberration, continued singing—“ ‘ lovely dear !

my vows shall ever—’” she broke off with, “ ‘ I jolly tar, on board a man-of-war,’ ” and went to a small shelf, from the top of which she took some more hemp, and returning to her wheel, continued her only avocation.

“ Do, Charles,” said Margaret, quite frightened at what had occurred, “ do leave this : I am so alarmed ! You must come, my dear ; and you can ride over here again to-morrow : but I cannot bear her eyes — they look so dead.”

Poor old Jenkins turned away to wipe another and another tear. Stanhope took his hand, and pointing to the Bible, which still stood open on the small round table, said, “ You must seek, my poor old friend ! for real consolation *there*. But you shall not want what little the world can give. I think I know of a cottage not far from this at a small rent, and which has a garden and more rooms.—But I will come over and see you again soon.” As he said this, he shook him warmly by the hand ; and leading Margaret to the door, who made a kind ‘of timid bow, she was placed upon her

horse, and the visitors were soon at a distance from that scene of woe and wretchedness.

For some time Stanhope could not speak ; and when he did, it was merely an ejaculation, such as—"dreadful !" "horrid !" "misery !" until, passing the place where the old cottage stood, and in which Jenkins had passed his prime of years and manhood, he again stopped his horse, and commenced some observations on the uncertainty of the enjoyments of this life ; when Margaret complained of the cold, and Charles increased his pace until he arrived at his own house. He assisted his wife from her horse, and then seeing her pocket handkerchief in the pocket of her saddle, he drew it out, and with it the paper in which was the money he had destined for old Jenkins. He looked at her, for the noise as the money fell caused her to turn ; his eye was a mixture of disappointment and reproach ; but Margaret merely said, "Oh ! I quite forgot it ! another day will do as well : " and arranging the fall of her habit, she walked unconcernedly into the house.

Not so Stanhope ; whose heart was mortified beyond expression to find that such a relation of facts could have taken place, and that his dear, his fondly-loved Margaret, could turn not only a deaf, but an indifferent ear to such a recital. He seized the money, jumped again upon his horse, and although the wind was high, the night advancing, the cold sleet falling, he started off at a gallop, and was soon again at the cottage door.

“ I have come again, Jenkins, to repair an oversight. I was so bewildered by your narrative, that I forgot the chief object of my visit. Here, my good old man, take this ; and I will soon place you in a better situation.”

He looked round the solitary room : the old woman was still at her wheel, the children still occupied the corner, the Bible was open, and before Jenkins could thank him, the dame had again sung, “ Susan ! Susan ! lovely dear !”

With a heart oppressed, he turned his horse’s head towards home ; and, not heeding the storm which now fell fast, he walked leisurely towards that house in which he had passed so many

days: he stopped again to view the mark on which poor old Jenkins's cottage had stood, and in which he had passed his time, surrounded by his family, and respected by his friends.

In reviewing the painful scene he had that day witnessed, the mind of Stanhope naturally reverted to the cold indifference of his wife;—even he who loved as few have ever loved, whose whole heart was that of open, honest, and brave manhood—to whose eye the tear of pity would mount unbidden, who could not hear of the distresses of others without sighing to relieve them,—even his heart misgave him, when he saw in remembrance, whilst the tears were coursing down the cheeks of Jenkins and himself, the cold indifferent figure of Margaret as she played with the children, and *could* abstract herself from the scene around her. “She wants energy,” he said to himself as he bowed his head down to keep the snow from his face, “she wants exciting; she has lived so long amongst these people that she has forgotten all but herself: and we must go to Paris,—we must change our residence.” And as he urged

his horse to a quicker pace in order to gain his home before the night had thoroughly set in, he determined to solicit leave of absence for three months, and endeavour to warm the heart of his wife by the attractions of friendship. Julia and Margaret had never met since their marriage ; and the sprightly Julia might animate the cold heart of the beautiful girl, and thus render Stanhope happier in the possession of a treasure on which he so much doted, but who that day had certainly not gained much in his estimation.

CHAPTER VIII.

WALSINGHAM now appeared in a different character. Formerly his equipage was humble, a kind of *cabriolet de remise* was his only vehicle : but now he drove to the hotel in a cabriolet of his own ; his person bedizened with silks and chains, his dress neater ; his servant a grown tiger with a gaudy livery, standing behind the vehicle, courting general observation, —thus, as he thought, enhancing the quality of his master. But it was a remark of Vidocq, who certainly had sufficient opportunities of knowing the materials of which his strange countrymen are compounded, that “ whenever in *Paris* a man was seen with a gaudy cabriolet, with a servant standing behind it conspicuously dressed, *the master was a swindler.*” And this remark was elicited from him when

one of our countrymen was endeavouring to trace a worthless fellow who had passed himself off as the son of one of the most respectable people in France ; and who, having introduced himself as such, had received the fortune of the lady he had promised to marry, had squandered or concealed the money, and then refused to fulfil his promise. It was to Vidocq that the Englishman applied ; and that shrewd man, after asking several questions concerning the dress of the master and servant, the colour of the cabriolet, and this peculiar one—"Does he drive his servant inside, or does he stand behind?" and being answered that the servant invariably stood behind, replied, "*C'est un chevalier d'industrie.*"

This alteration in the dress was the consequence of his success in teaching Douglass écarté ; and the old saying, that one must always pay for his own experience, was here fully exemplified. If one lesson had sufficed, perhaps the loss would not have signified ; but it was followed by another and another ; and the new cabriolet, the frequent boxes at the various

theatres—the whole altered man, was the result of continued ill fortune on one side, and of unparalleled success on the other. Robert was minus three thousand pounds, which had changed hands and was now quietly nursing for the future fortune of Walsingham; and as each accumulation to his store, in equal proportion rose the one and sank the other, so the one became a little less a favourite, and the other felt all the keenness of revenge, and all the wish of the foolish to endeavour, by persevering, to regain his losses. Douglass in this was artfully seconded by the very person who was picking his pocket; for occasionally he rose a winner, perhaps of fifty or a hundred pounds; but assuredly this was retaken with sufficient interest the evening following: and thus two evils grew more formidable — one, the constant companionship of Walsingham, and the growing attachment of Amelia; the other, the continual drain on the resources of Robert, who had long since abandoned the idea of living on his income, and, like all gamblers, was squandering his principal by wholesale. Affairs were in this

state, one evening, when Robert and Walsingham were playing in the Salon, the ladies were together in Julia's room ; and having dismissed the inquisitive attendant, Julia began.—

“ Well, my pretty Amelia, I think before long we shall have to hurry your brother over here. It is needless for you to disguise your feelings for Mr. Walsingham ; and without being much of a Solomon, I might say, that, under all the circumstances of the case, he must already have made you sensible of his attachment—perhaps *he has spoken* ?”

“ No, Julia, on my honour he has not. He certainly has gone so near the words, without requiring or pressing an answer, that I have latterly become more bold, and I do not feel the tremor I did feel the first time I was ever alone with him. Latterly he has become a little more distant, and has returned to the cold formality of ‘Miss Stanhope ;’ whereas he did once or twice call me *his* Amelia.”

“ And, Amelia, do you really love him ? Come, don't blush, there is no one here to betray you ; between us surely there can be no

secrets. I, although as young as yourself within a year, am your protector. You are here under my wing; and I know you would not conceal from your Julia what friendship has made me ask."

"There can be no shame in the confession to you, Julia; and I frankly own I *did* love him—truly, sincerely!"

"That is right, my dear Amelia—*did* indeed! We are now informed of your feelings, and we must be careful you are not slighted; but tell me, has he ever spoken to you of his family or his connexions? because it has appeared to me rather odd that in all his communication with Robert, he never has once mentioned them."

"Yes," replied Amelia; "one day in the Louvre he spoke of his father as very infirm—that he was Sir William Walsingham; but that unfortunately they were not on the best of terms, arising from the wish of his father that he should marry some heiress whose estate adjoined his own; but that he, although he poignantly felt the breach between himself and his

parent, (and he really was very much overcome when he spoke of it,)—yet that he never could offer his hand to her, more especially since he had seen me.”

“ Well, Amelia, that was as near an offer direct as ever I heard—what did you answer ?”

“ Nothing at all,” replied Amelia ; “ and although he squeezed my hand gently, and I felt a slight tremor myself, yet we neither of us continued the subject. He seemed, poor fellow, quite distressed when he spoke of his father, and I was glad to spare him any further grief on my account. He remarked that I was unwilling to increase his pain, and finished by saying, ‘ Well, one day the property must be mine—and that day is not far distant.’ ”

“ Is he very amusing, Amelia, in his conversation ? for latterly he has become very quiet, and he seems so earnest in everything he does, that since they have played at *écarté* for five-franc pieces one hears not a word but ‘ propose.’ ”

“ That is precisely what I do *not* hear,” replied Amelia, laughing ; “ but latterly during

the evening, since the detestable card-table has been the mutual object of both Robert and Adolphus, they seem whilst they shuffle the pack—to cut us.”

“That is a dear pretty name, Amelia:—Adolphus Walsingham,—Sir Adolphus, I should say,—will sound well; and even your brother, fastidious as he is, will never object to a fine-looking baronet with a comfortable estate. But did he speak of his present fortune?”

“Yes,” replied Amelia; “he seemed resolved to act most honourably in making his approaches. He told me he was now a beggar, merely vegetating on two thousand a year; but, that he managed, by great caution and economy, to exist: that the fact was, he knew so many of the poor nobility, to whom it was really charity to give a dinner occasionally, that they quite drained his resources, and left him a Paris, instead of a parish, pauper.”

“I remarked at the opera,” continued Julia, “that he seemed well acquainted with all the performers; and his taste in music is undeniable. In all the really beautiful parts, I remarked, he

awakened your attention ; and he seemed evidently not only to enjoy, but to understand the music. It is true, almost all young men of fashion pretend to both ; but you discover their ignorance as easily as the traveller discovered the monkey in man's clothes, who had forgotten to hide his tail."

"He does talk well, certainly," replied Amelia ; "I never knew a man who riveted the attention more to the subject : and yet he is so light and trivial at times, that he contrives to keep a smile upon my countenance even when otherwise I should be thoughtful and reserved."

"You know, Amelia, that we women have the reputation of excessive curiosity ; and therefore I know you will grant the favour I am about to ask. You know how young I was courted, asked, and married ; and you know that Robert was the only person—the only man, I may say—who ever addressed a word of kindness to me. Now I have a curiosity beyond all expression to know how another man converses when he is truly in love ; and as I think that Walsingham most certainly

does admire you excessively, I want you to grant me the request."

"And how," interrupted Amelia, "is this to be accomplished?"

"Nothing more easy," continued Julia. "We are exactly of a height; our voices are similar; and even were our figures so very different, the long robe of the domino would conceal it. On the night of the masquerade, we will both be dressed exactly alike; and you shall make Walsingham acquainted that you intend to wear a small white jessamine in your band. We will come into the room together, and enter the masquerade together: then Walsingham will select me, for I will wear the flower; and when I am satisfied with his soft nothings, I can transfer them to you, and he will never discover the cheat.

"I agree, my dear Julia, I agree. But supposing at that very time he should declare his affections for me?"

"Why, then, I will accept him, Amelia: and you will not be the first girl who has been proposed for *to* a mother, or accepted *by* a

friend. Gratify me only in this : it is perhaps a foolish request ; but somehow I have a kind of presentiment that something ludicrous will occur, and we will puzzle these lords of the creation by the cross questions and crooked answers which must necessarily follow.”

“ But, Julia, act the part well ;—I imagine that he has deferred speaking until that night. You shall have him for an hour — which to me will appear an age : and mind you tremble properly, and feel very giddy, if he should propose. Do *act* well, and I dare say, with your experience, you will surpass the reality. So good night ; for these gamblers for *sous* must be tired of that foolish game before now, and I may be surprised in this improper dress by your staid and sobered husband.”

Very different was the scene in the saloon. There sat two determined gamesters : the retreat of the ladies had released them from the necessity of concealing their stakes, and they were now playing for two hundred pounds the best of five games. Hitherto the luck had rather favoured Walsingham ; and Robert, who

played neither coolly nor judiciously, vented his spleen at the eternal tide of ill-luck which seemed set against him now and always. Like all men who cannot command their tempers under the grievance of loss, he declared it useless to propose, for Walsingham always took in such brilliant cards ; and if by any chance, when two tricks had been won by each, Walsingham happened to have the ten of the same suit of which Robert had the nine, he of course declared himself the most unfortunate man in the world. This irascibility of temper enabled Walsingham to play to a greater certainty ; and, what with superior skill, what with a little sleight-of-hand, and what with the reckless manner of Robert, that evening closed at midnight, and about twelve hundred pounds went into Walsingham's pockets.

“ You are indeed, my dear sir,” said Walsingham, “ more unfortunate than any man I ever opposed : I am generally a losing player, but with your cards the German Jew could not win. I really feel quite ashamed of receiving this large sum.” Saying which, he folded the

check upon Lafitte's house and placed it carefully in his pocket-book ; whilst Douglass, eyeing him with a malicious vengeance, could not suppress his feelings.

“ It is devilish odd, Walsingham, that whenever we play for small stakes you invariably *allow* me to win !”

“ *Allow* you to win !” retorted Walsingham ; “ you may spare me that compliment, for I endeavour to win every game we play. I am not like a cringing aide-de-camp playing chess with his general, who fights him to a pawn, and then accidentally loses the game. Had you played as you played formerly at the Salon, with the luck you have had since your return, you would have been ruined without redemption.”

“ This eternal run,” replied Douglass, “ will soon effect that ruin. Since my first arrival in Paris, and that is only three months in all, I have lost upwards of thirty thousand pounds—very nearly half my fortune, for my estate does not yield me a farthing, or at least very little indeed, and the improvements have swallowed up the revenue.—But away with this sad re-

trospection!—it is needless. If I go on at this rate, I must find some method of living, and, I suppose, like all gamesters, become a swindler.” A slight blush flew over the face of Walsingham; but it found the cheeks too cold and left them on the instant.

“However,” continued Douglass, “I am resolved to have one great coup at the Salon the night of the masquerade. I must get a domino with two colours, black outside and scarlet within, which I can change as I like: I can easily conceal another mask under my dress: and thus I can elude the vigilance of my wife and that sharp-eyed Amelia. You must go unmasked, Walsingham.”

“Not I indeed; I am rather too well known for that: I should be pestered out of my life. No; let us go exactly the same: I will have a scarlet-lined domino, and I will get four masks exactly the same:—in short, leave it to me. We can then, if we feel disposed, have some amusement with the ladies, and can find out some of the secrets of the prison-house. I do think Miss Stanhope a most enchanting crea-

ture, and I anticipate some glorious fun on that night."

"I shall leave the fun to you, Walsingham, for *play* I must and will; and if I lose, I may then think of retiring for life."

No sooner had Walsingham taken his departure than a gleam of reason occurred to Robert. He saw himself gradually sinking; he saw that in avoiding public play he had fallen into worse company. The saying of the old gentleman at the dinner often came to his recollection—the hint which he threw out relative to the respectability of Walsingham—his unaccountable good fortune, and his almost certainty of turning the king if he dealt when his score was at four; yet had he watched him and watched him narrowly. Then came the apprehension of Douglass that, should Walsingham be a wolf in disguise, he might have sacrificed Amelia: for he saw with pain that she no longer listened to him, but that she had been fascinated by the manner of Walsingham. This he resolved to fathom; and thus ponder-

ing over past events, and having before his eyes the more cheerful rainbow of hope, he retired to bed at one in the morning, agitated by his loss, burning for revenge, and nurturing a hatred for Walsingham.

The slight indisposition of his wife gave Robert an opportunity of an hour's quiet conversation with Amelia on the following morning. There she was, redolent of beauty, her dark eyes sparkling with animation, her spirits high, her manner enchanting; and in her society Douglass lost the dreary recollection of his continued misfortune, and once again became both gay and lively.

"Now, little darling," he said as he took the small hand of Amelia, "I am going to enact father to you, and I expect you will make a proper confession: so begin at once. I shall not be over hard in my punishments: twenty or thirty Ave Marias would only occupy your time for an hour."

"Indeed, Padre Robert," replied the gay girl, "when I confess, it will be to my lover."

“And am not I, Amelia, an *admirer*—perhaps a ——”

Amelia put her small hand over his mouth, and said, “Don’t confess to me what I should be obliged to punish with the greatest severity.”

“And if I did,” continued Douglass, “you could only inflict one punishment which would dishearten me; and that would be, forbidding me your company.”

A strange tremor agitated the frame of Amelia, a sudden blush suffused her cheek, and in endeavouring to conceal her confusion she made it the more evident. Robert perceived it—at once he imagined that Amelia loved him; and although in that moment his reason might have strayed, yet he could not but be aware of the increased pulsation in his own blood. For a moment both were silent and both confused; but those who have accustomed themselves to study the human heart might have fancied they discerned in the distraction of both, that Douglass had betrayed the secret of his heart, and that the secret was not credited by Amelia.

“Amelia,” he said as he pressed her hand, “look at me, my little angel.” The brightness of her eye was dimmed by a falling tear, her face was flushed, her lips were apart, and her teeth shone like the polished ivory. She did not speak ; and in that silence was the worst of confessions—the most eloquent of acknowledgments.

“Amelia,” he continued, “I have watched you narrowly lately ; my mind has been employed in ascertaining if you really loved Walsingham. That you do love him I am convinced, and my object in this conversation is to elicit that fact.”

“Love *him*,” replied Amelia : “I could have loved him ; but ——”

“But what, my angel ?”

“That I dare not—cannot tell you,” she replied. “Nay, I think until the night before last I did esteem him, and even told Julia that I loved him sincerely ; but ——”

“Then,” replied Douglass, “it is only something which occurred within a short period of time that has altered your affections.”

“*Only*,” replied Amelia ; “but I fear that *only* may lead to your destruction. I almost doubt his being an honourable man.—You start ; but listen. Yesterday, when you and Julia went to the Rue Vivienne to buy those artificial flowers, and I was left alone at home, I, as usual, began to practise my singing, and was secure from intrusion, as the hour was earlier than he generally came. I was startled by a ring at the door-bell, and before I could remove myself into another room Mr. Walsingham was by my side. His first inquiries were for you ; but I found out, as we prolonged our conversation, that he had seen you walking through the Place de la Bourse. He sat by my side, and after some trivial remarks about the masquerade to-morrow night, and his leaving the tickets, he began in that low sweet voice of his to talk of love. I cannot repeat all he said ; but this he did,—he ridiculed marriage, and in glowing terms quoted poetry to cast a sneer upon love when shackled. I own I was much fascinated by the manner in which he repeated the lines, and I dare say I

might have encouraged his continuation from my attention to him ; but suddenly he knelt before me, and just as he was about to falsify his quotation by offering me his hand,—for that must have been his object,—you returned. But say not a word—I have a trap laid for him in which he will fall : promise me, as you love me, not to say one word to him ; leave him to me : I dare say you think me passionately fond of him—and so I am still ; I cannot tear him from me, for I feel my affection fixed upon him. I love *you*, it is true,” she continued, smiling, “but only as I should love my father confessor and my friend.”

“What !” replied Douglass, “*only* that !”

“Do not continue,” said Amelia, “or I must inflict the punishment of banishment.—How dare you, sir,” she said laughingly, “talk of love even to me ? I am a droll girl, I know ; but I am one who, independent of the ties of virtue and religion, can take advantage of the experience of others.”

“But, Amelia,” replied Robert, “what has all this to do with leading to my destruction ?”

“That is a question I will not answer until the day after to-morrow. Now I must go and see Julia. Remember I have said that I love *you* ; so I trust I shall have to make no more confessions on that account.”

“She is an extraordinary girl,” muttered Robert to himself when left alone. “I thought she really did love me, and I might have been induced by her beauty to have followed the course of young Houghton. I verily believe I am not only a liar, but a villain. Here am I, with a wife who loves me beyond the general love of wives—whose only will is to render me happy, whose every thought is for my welfare ; and yet am I such a scoundrel, so heartlessly ungrateful, as to confess an attachment to another. Now I am cool enough ; but another tremor, another dimmed look from Amelia, and since I have ceased to control my feelings, I would not answer for my affections. When once a man consents to follow indiscretion as a guide, what a scoundrel he may become !”

“Ah, Julia, my only dear, I am glad to see you so soon recovered ! You must keep up

your spirits for to-morrow night, for I anticipate much amusement from the tom-foolery. How is little Houghton?"

"A little better," replied Julia, "but fretful from the pain of his first tooth. Why, where is Amelia?"

"Has she not been with you, my dear?"

"No," replied Julia; "but as she is not here, I will make you a confidant in her secret. Husband and wife are legally one, and what is entrusted to me is not betrayed by my retailing it to you. Amelia is in love, desperate with—"

"Walsingham," interrupted Robert, "it can only be with him or myself, for she knows no one else."

"Well, don't flatter yourself, Robert—it is not you; but it is one of the two persons you mentioned."

"Did she tell you so?" asked Robert.

"Yes, the night before last she confessed it to me; and I, to show you a woman can keep a secret, never told you. Had you not better write to Charles?"

"Not until he has proposed to *marry* her,"

said Robert : “ I can be her guardian and protector until then.”

“ He is the son of Sir William Walsingham,” continued Julia.

“ Indeed !” replied Robert with some surprise : “ I did not know that.”

“ Then you must have known or cared very little about your schoolfellow,” — (a slight blush passed over Robert’s face,) — “ or you would have known his birth, parentage, and education.”

“ Faith,” continued Robert, “ I think I *do* know quite enough of him. But if we are to have him as a kind of connexion, we may as well make a few more inquiries ; and I shall, by way of beginning, write to Stanhope.”

“ And that, my dear, is what I want you to do ; for although Amelia has a tender, a good and affectionate heart, yet she is a woman : and even I, young as I am, know how little our sex are to be depended upon when once they have yielded up their affections to men.”

Douglass left the room, and Julia was alone. She began to have some strange misgivings about

Walsingham—why she knew not, for he was to her the most respectful, the most assiduous of attendants. He was more French than English in his endeavours to be useful ; he watched her eyes, and seemed to divine her wish ; and if those eternal attentions mentioned by the great Master of Love could have weaned Julia from her husband, she might have fallen to Walsingham. But she looked upon Robert more as a divinity than a man ; her whole soul was wrapped up in his and his son's welfare and happiness. She saw the marks of care which latterly had increased upon his face ; she saw him restless by day, sleepless by night ; and she heard, whenever he fell into an unquiet doze, words almost inarticulate, but such as her imagination soon suited to a sentence. The fatal cards were the subject of his dreams ; and although she watched him narrowly, and knew that he did not play excepting for the trifling sum of five francs with Walsingham, yet she was astonished at the pleasure, at the excitement he seemed to experience even for so trivial an amount.

To question him was useless ; she had tried that over and over again. She then had recourse to the child, and by bringing it frequently to Douglass, she hoped to withdraw his attention from that which was evidently near his mind, to the child ; and here she tried all those little winning affections, which constitute the happiness of domestic life. It was useless : a settled kind of melancholy seemed stealing over him ; he was every day becoming more and more indifferent to scenes around him ; his mornings were passed in idleness, and the evening seemed to linger, in spite of the song of Amelia or the conversation of Julia, until the hour arrived for cards ; then indeed his countenance lighted up—then he became all animation and attention ; and anybody but a fond woman might have seen the cause of this altered behaviour. Strange however as it may appear, Julia placed the whole to a wrong account : she had perceived—and where is the jealous woman who allows a glance to go unnoticed?—that Robert was latterly to be found with Amelia—that they spoke low, had intelligible communication by the eyes,

and that he seized every opportunity of avoiding her for the society of her friend.

There is no true love without a spice of the green-eyed monster ; and the ears of the suspicious are quick, and the eyes watchful. Julia had that morning been guilty of a meanness in endeavouring to overhear the conversation between Amelia and her husband ; and her jealousy was more excited from the cautious tone of the voice, which counteracted all her endeavours. Now she cast her eyes over the room as if to find some note which might have been left neglected ; and then, with a kind of sullen step, she retreated to her greatest comfort in all her afflictions—her infant.

She had not left the room a minute before Walsingham entered ; and he advanced with the light step of a man fearful of detection. Amelia had heard the bell, and guessed who was the visitor. She approached by another door, which was partially open, and she saw him open the card-box, take out the *new* pack and substitute others ; he then carefully closed the box, and going to the piano, struck a chord, as if

to announce his arrival. Amelia shortly afterwards entered the room.

“I come, Miss Stanhope,” said Walsingham, “to throw myself at your feet and implore your pardon for the indiscretion of which I was guilty yesterday. There are times when the most prudent may be overcome by excess of passion ; it is no sin to worship an angel, and thus I now defend my own idolatry : pray pardon me this once, and my future conduct shall convince you how much I regret having occasioned your displeasure.”

“The confession of a folly is the first step towards repentance,” replied Amelia with a smile : “pray be seated.”

“Then I am to consider that the waters of oblivion have washed out the remembrance of my fault ?” said Walsingham.

“Even so, Mr. Walsingham ; and I shall forget every part of yesterday’s conversation : so now let us talk of *graver* matters. The masquerade to-night,—at what time will it be requisite to be there ?”

“Not before eleven,” replied Walsingham.

“But, Miss Stanhope, I have one request to make, —and it shows how bold even the repentant may become:—Will you allow me to be your protector and guide,—to have the honour of dancing with you,—in short, to warn you against those who are unknown, and be a kind of master of the ceremonies upon this pleasant occasion? Of course you are aware that your mask ought only to be a half mask, the lower part consisting of black silk: it gives you more air, and is more convenient if you feel inclined to take any refreshment without showing your face. I have merely mentioned this because I thought you *one who would profit by the experience of others*, and consequently not disdain advice although it emanated from me.”

“I am equally obliged, Mr. Walsingham, but Julia and myself are going closely masked, and dressed after our own fashion. I hope, with all the devotion you have declared, even to idolatry, you will not mistake some one else for me.”

“I warrant, you shall see I know the difference. Surely, in the light elastic tread, the an-

gelic figure, the soft voice, the manner so natural, and perhaps a glance at some stray portion of that raven hair, I can divine you from any other. Besides, your eyes are dark as night, and your friend's are as blue as an Italian sky."

"We have invented a plan by which you will not be able to discover us by our eyes;—in short, we have practised our intended walk, we have tried our voices even before our servant, and *she* has not detected the one from the other: and thus am I willing to forewarn you of the difficulty."

"But we can obviate that," replied Walsingham, "because I can hand you from the carriage."

"No, indeed," replied Amelia; "you will, Mr. Walsingham, do no such thing. We intend, when we are dressed, to walk into this room,—not to speak one word—to walk arm-in-arm into the masquerade; and there you may take me, and I will cheerfully dance with you, if you can discover me."

"But let me implore you, my dear Miss

Amelia, to think of the consequences should I whisper to your friend what I would were only audible to yourself: she might imagine me capable of endeavouring to supplant her husband. And besides, I must tell you that I had hoped for this night's conversation with ceaseless anxiety; and now, when the cup of pleasure is so near my lips, to dash it from them is cruel! Let me implore you to give me this slight proof of your esteem, and confide some secret mode by which I may know you beyond a doubt." (Here he took her hand and tenderly squeezed it.) "Nay, Amelia, as you value my happiness do not balk my present intention."

Amelia turned away her head, and curiosity, that fatal gift to women, prompted her to say, "she dared not, for Julia would be so angry." (Still he retained her hand.)

"That is half an assent," replied Walsingham; "and Julia's anger can shortly be removed. Once more let me entreat you, Amelia, for I confess much of my future happiness depends upon this night's conversation."

"Indeed, Mr. Walsingham, I dare not. And

yet," she continued, "if you promise never to reveal this treachery of mine—"

"Never, never, by Heaven !" interrupted Walsingham.

"Then I will tell you. I intend to wear this small flower in my band;" and going to her desk, she showed one flower of the jessamine, so small that it certainly would not have been discernible but for the black ground on which the white flower was to be placed. "Thus you will know me.—Now mind, Mr. Walsingham, I rely upon your honour not to betray the secret to Mr. Douglass ; for I could not have been guilty of this indiscretion, had I not—"

"Do, pray, continue, Amelia ; do gratify my vanity by ending that sentence."

"No, no, Mr. Walsingham ; you are vain enough already, and your vanity shall be my excuse."

"Why, Amelia, you find excuses as well as that learned Frenchman who never ate suppers until he found that the moon was a good aider of digestion !"

"Well, Mr. Walsingham, when we eat our

supper this night, perhaps I will continue the sentence. But I must replace this flower; for if Julia sees it, she will suspect that I have allowed my curiosity to overcome my discretion."

"Dear angel!" murmured Walsingham to himself, "the time will come, I hope and trust, when you will have to confess your *indiscretions* to me."

Amelia opened a book, and having placed the flower in security, she turned over one or two leaves.

"What may your studies be, Amelia?" asked Walsingham.

"Oh, merely a novel," was the reply, "which I love to pore over—I am so very fond of them."

"They are the worst kind of reading, my dear girl; for novels do great injury to the cause of sound and wholesome literature, and sometimes depreciate morality. It is by these light works that the taste of readers is destroyed for useful books, and the facts of history and the descriptions of poetry appear dull and insipid. Do you like poetry?"

“Very much indeed,” was the reply; “and I often read at night when the rest of our family are asleep.”

“Ha! Walsingham,” said Douglass, entering, “I am glad to see you! You dine with us to-day, and we will all go together to the masquerade.—By the bye, I wanted to speak to you alone.”

“Oh, I take the hint, Robert;” and Amelia left the room.

“Have you secured our dresses?”

“I have,” said Walsingham; “and you will find them in your ante-chamber.—But stop; I want to see how much taller you are than myself.” Both parties stood before the glass, and they were exactly of a height; although Walsingham, from being the thinnest, looked the tallest.

“The dress,” Douglass continued, “will obviate all that; and you must mind, when I go to have a desperate coup, that you enact my part, and play the husband and the protector. Do you know, Walsingham, I am getting quite a woman; and I doubt if any one of the female sex, even in love, was half so superstitious as

I am. I have been telling my fortune by the cards, and three times I found the king of spades at the bottom. Now, if Captain Rabi foretold his death at the battle of Austerlitz* by the ten of spades being always in that position, and if his wife's dreams were to be realised, I see no reason why I should not share the same fate : and if so, I shall be ruined, or near it, to-night."

"And yet you foolishly go to throw away your money! Surely you can amuse yourself sufficiently by *écarté*, and if the stakes are not high enough, I have no objection to increase them, so as to allow you to regain the trifle I have won. But why, with all this dreary prognostication, allow Fate to triumph, when by a little resolution you may defy her? Surely, surely, my good friend, you have excitement enough at home."

"True, I have what many men would call enough, and my losses are more than sufficient

* See a very clever paper (indeed they all are so,) in the United Service Journal for January 1835, entitled "Captain Rabi, or the Ten of Spades," in the Sketches of a Foreign Military Life.

to counterbalance the pleasure: but I always think I play to a disadvantage with you; your knowledge of the game gives you a superiority; and however insignificant the trade may be, it requires *some* apprenticeship."

"If you think *that*, I will most willingly give you one game in seven, and we can play the *partie* for any increased sum you like,—or try backgammon."

"No; backgammon I hate: but I will take with pleasure the odds you offer, and I will play you this evening for a thousand pounds the best of the seven games."

"Agreed, agreed," said Walsingham: "when we begin, we will play that match.—Surely, I heard the handle of that door turn!"

Douglass went to look; but there was no one in the room, although he himself thought he heard the farther door shut.

"Fancy, fancy," he continued. "You'll be here, then, Walsingham, at six o'clock: you can dress in my room for the masquerade."

CHAPTER IX.

THAT the conduct of Amelia was strange — nay, very strange—there can be no doubt. In the first place, she had at one time entertained a high opinion of Walsingham; but his sinister behaviour, his libertine conversation and manner, a little alarmed her; and now, although she thought she saw in him a man of a very suspicious character, yet she loved him—her heart was no longer her own, and all the arguments with which she endeavoured to school herself, failed to wean her of her affection. The circumstance of having seen Walsingham remove the cards, the constant fretfulness of Douglass's temper, convinced her that gaming occupied his time. Again, she could not suspect her lover of a dishonourable action—it was some trick he intended; and she, to counteract this, pur-

chased new cards and substituted them for those which Walsingham had placed. Yet those of his were in the proper wrappers, and evidently had not been opened:—she turned them over and over, examined them with feminine curiosity, but she refrained from breaking the covers, being resolved to laugh at the failure of his trick. She resolved to sit by him during the evening's play, for she had overheard the match made for one thousand pounds. Though she believed and lent implicit confidence to the history of Walsingham's birth, the quarrel with his father, and his refusal to marry, yet this changing of the cards, done so suspiciously,—the guarded manner he had surveyed the room,—the caution, the cunning,—never once made it occur to her that her lover could be a swindler. He was evidently a contradiction;—one moment ridiculing the most sacred obligation; the next, inculcating morality by his conversation—(his opinion upon light and frivolous reading, for instance:) and only once had he ever swerved from the strict manner of a gentleman; and that was when, in a hurried and impassioned tone,

he expressed his sentiments warmly, and actually embraced her.

But Douglass had known him as an old school-fellow—certainly had encouraged the affection he must have perceived: Walsingham dined daily at the house, and contributed to the amusement of the society; for, independent of his card-playing for such a *trifle*, he sang well, and was accomplished.

To a girl of Amelia's age, with hoyden spirits and lively imagination, these different and conflicting testimonies were only likely to embarrass her. With all his faults, she admired him—and admiration in a woman is very nearly akin to love: indeed, had Walsingham, when he so rudely embraced her, followed the kiss or preceded it by a proposition of marriage, there can be no doubt but that Amelia would have accepted him. Now, in spite of her fondness, she had discovered him to be a gamester, and by way of saving *him* more than Douglass from perdition, she thought of telling Julia. But then, the very idea that her husband, under the pretence of playing for five francs, was

risking a thousand pounds,—the duplicity of the action, the evident concealment from her of his actual behaviour,—would, Amelia knew right well, have caused a suspicion which must have ended in a decided difference.

On her own observation then she relied, hoping to save both, yet willing not to discover anything to the prejudice of Walsingham, for she was aware of the affection she bore him, and the almost *love* she felt for Douglass. With the former her intimacy had so gradually increased, that, like the advance of age, it was imperceptible to those who were nearest. We progress so gradually from the first formal “Miss Stanhope,” to the unintentional “Amelia;” we grow from the formal “Good morning,” and “Good night,” to a warm cordial shake of the hand;—then (surely the Devil is the plotter!) we in a playful mood, and, Heaven knows without the least idea of anything but merriment, kiss the hand—alas! how imperceptibly we get to the lips, and then marry.

Walsingham had retired to his apartments: he lived in a neat well-appointed *entresol* in the

Rue de la Chaussée d'Antin, in which were perceptible the luxuries of gentility. On his round marble table, that everlasting piece of cold furniture in every house in Paris, was a good sprinkling of good books; a Bible and a Prayer-book were amongst the number,—for if the Devil can quote Scripture, he must have had a book to learn it from. On one side of the table was the “ Magic Book,” a work likely to supersede even the talents of Mademoiselle Norman, the greatest impostor of any age, and a woman who rolls in luxury by administering to the *cupidity* of the female sex in every sense of the word and pun. A large clock in imitation of a cathedral stood over the mantel-piece, and struck the hour in that deep and solemn tone well in unison with the building from which it emanated. The room was carpeted and comfortable; the wood fire blazed in the grate, whilst the crackle of the fuel and the sparkle of the flame gave the apartment a lively and desirable appearance. On one side, and with his back to the light, reclined Walsingham in an easy chair. His occupations were various: he had been reading, he

had been discovering by means of the Magic Book his future fortune ; and he now was busily employed in dealing five cards to his supposed adversary and five to himself, and then turning up a *king*. It was neither the first nor the fortieth time that he had taken his daily practice : for as an opera-dancer is obliged to twirl upon one toe, and caper upon both legs for hours and hours together, twisting himself into various postures, called by fashion, elegant ; and as those who sing or squall Italian bravuras must by practice keep their voices and throats in order ; so must the professed swindler undergo his daily labour in order to deceive the unwary so completely that suspicion shall not arise.

“ That will do for to-day,” said this arch villain to himself, reclining upon his chair, “ and that thousand pounds is safe. Now have I got a flat in my net, and I can hold him fast.— Let me see : before he came to Paris I was down to my last five hundred franc note, and how I got that my conscience takes care to remind me ; now am I worth no less than three

thousand pounds, and by ten o'clock this night shall be worth four.

“That girl’s arrival was the making of me ; for now I have driven him into private play, and am reaping the golden harvest of my own ingenuity. He talks of being ruined, or likely to be so by his play to-night ; I must somehow hinder that—his money must be mine, and I am mistaken if Amelia shall not be mine without benefit of clergy. I have done this well ; my observations are moral, my behaviour to his wife distant, reserved, yet friendly ; but a curse upon my tongue and my folly which betrayed my intentions to Amelia before my plan was ripe ! I must look up some old French quotations about love and friendship, for English girls listen more readily to either Italian or French. Amelia must be the link by which I shall enchain Douglass ; and once independent *again*—once in a situation to live retired and like a gentleman, I can cast off my old and my bad habits, and appear in a country town in England like a snake which has just cast its skin, all gold and

brightness ; although I must keep clear of Worcester and that neighbourhood. Now I am above want ; but as the garden *is* to be robbed, as we said at school, I might just as well have a pull at the golden fruit, as allow it to be plucked and preserved by the proprietor of the Salon.

“ The book foretells me bad luck to-night : be it so—my ingenuity shall conquer fortune. And when he is ruined, as, poor fool he must be ! and he has sent his wife back to England a beggar, I will retain him here : his bills shall be paid—his credit above suspicion, and I will employ him to my own advantage ; he shall be initiated into the new mysteries, and by making him a villain to avoid poverty, I will enrich myself at the hazard of Douglass. So now for a few verses of the Bible, a few proverbs of Solomon, a few extracts from that contradiction of a man Voltaire ; and what with these and my own aptitude at making quotations, the deuce is in it if I cannot deceive the women, and make that fool believe me.”

His bell rang, and Douglass was announced ; but at the first vibration of sound, the cards and

the magic had been removed, and Walsingham was reading a prophecy of Isaiah.

“Ah! Douglass, I am glad to see *you* here ! for your visits are, ‘ like angels, few and far between.’ To be sure, I always forestall your intention, for with such fascination as you possess at home, no wonder we poor fellows feel the attraction and own the power.”

“ That’s a fine speech,” said Robert, “ out of that book:—let us see—the Bible !! that indeed !”

“ It is my custom,” replied Walsingham, “ daily to read a certain portion : I find that I endure mortification the better, and I become more contented with life by the prospects held out of eternity. I always was a serious character, and, although sometimes driven for amusement——”

“ Into hell,” interrupted Robert.

“ Yes,” continued Walsingham, “ yet I always repaired the mischief by a chapter of consolation from this book.”

“ Everything in unison,” said Robert : “ the church for a clock, to remind you of salvation

and time. Why I never should have given you credit for half so much religion as I see before me."

"I have always been a misjudged man," replied Walsingham: "but I care not for the opinion of the *world*, as long as my friend knows me as an honest man."

"Talking of honesty," replied Robert,—“I want you to practise a little deception for me.”

"I fear you could not have selected a worse man," said Walsingham: "but, as long as it is innocent, I will assist you if I can."

"It is this," continued Robert:—"My wife knows that the house opposite to mine is the *Salon—the hell*. How are we to avoid her knowing this when we go to the masquerade? She would as soon tread the boards of the black gentleman's dominion down below as venture into that sink of iniquity, which she dreads more than all the world put together. *You must manage to deceive her.*"

"My dear Douglass, you should have acted openly with her, and told her that it was *the Salon*. I have always found that 'honesty

was the best policy,' and especially to forward domestic happiness : the wife and the husband should be one."

"Oh, curse your morality and your lecture!" interrupted Douglass ; " one would fancy you were a bishop going to give advice and a blessing. You *must* manage this ; you must speak to my coachman. I care not how it is done, —but it must be done,— or you will lose your masqued chat with Amelia, and I shall lose my play."

"Cunning fellow," replied Walsingham ; " you have well chosen the means to seduce me to your wishes !—Well, let me see!—Oh, I can manage it :—I will bring *my* carriage ; *yours of course* is gone to the coachmaker's.—Make your mind easy ; I will arrange it all. It is so innocent a deception, that I do not mind participating in the plot ; more especially as her aversion is founded on erroneous principle."

"And I suppose," interrupted Douglass, " Amelia has nothing to do with it."

"Sit down for a moment, and let us talk about that little divinity. She is a charming

girl!—such expression, such a graceful figure, such nobleness of countenance! and as for eyes—”

“ They go through you,” said Robert with mock gravity; “ like a flash of lightning through a gooseberry bush.”

“ I have been,” continued Walsingham, “ reading Burton’s *Anatomy of Melancholy* since I left you; and do pray tell me, for you by this time may be considered a judge, if he is right in his idea of matrimony. ‘ Marriage,’ he says, (I learnt it by heart,) ‘ is honourable, a blessed calling; it breeds true peace, tranquillity, content, and happiness; *quâ nulla est, aut fuit unquam, sanctior conjunctio*, as Daphnæus in Plutarch could well prove; *et quæ generi humano immortalitatem parat*, when they live without jarring, scolding, lovingly, as they should do, as Seneca lived with his Paulina, Abraham and Sarah, Artemisia and Mausolus, &c. &c. There is no pleasure in the world comparable to it; ’tis *summum mortalitatis bonum*, *hominum divûmque voluptas*, *alma Venus*. *Latet enim in muliere aliquid majus*,

potentiusque omnibus aliis humanis voluptatibus, as one holds. There is something in a woman beyond all human delight; a magnetic virtue, a charming quality, an occult and powerful motive.' Ay, Douglass?"

"Good morning, Walsingham. But before I go—did you learn all that Latin at school?"

"Not at Winchester, Douglass! Good morning."

"So, he is out of hearing, poor fellow!—and I have preciousy fooled him! he is just the man who cannot believe that the Bible may be in one hand whilst the other is in his pocket. Now to arrange a few more packs of cards; and cleverly enough I have placed them for to-night! To be sure, if a man has a right to be proud, it is when he can govern his neighbours, and make their wealth his, by the mere turning of a card. The educated and uneducated agree in this,—and nothing shows the extent of civilisation more than the multitude of pickpockets. The Caffre chief answered well, when he was asked, 'What is the chief end of man?' and he responded, '*to steal cattle*,' Every man ought

to have a profession, and I have mine : it has ugly names,—such as, swindler, gambler, cheat, blackleg, and so on ; but the fashionable French appellation is *chevalier d'industrie*,—and what is more honourable than an industrious gentleman. Poor Douglass ! he is gone home to his wife quite convinced that my mind is running riot on marriage ; and he will tell her all he remembers of my quotation, with some few additions ; and she will believe it, and Amelia will believe it—for girls are always fond of admiration, and always credulous—and this will look to her like sincere repentance. I verily believe there is no compliment, however absurd, but that some ugly woman would believe it ;—and in regard to beauty, one must follow the vulgar saying, ‘ Put it on generously ; some of it will stick.’ ”

“ Monsieur,” said a French valet, as he entered, “ votre cabriolet est à la porte.”

“ Bon,” was the reply ; and after arranging his dress with some care, he entered his vehicle and drove up the Champs Elysées into the Bois de Boulogne, to keep an appointment with a French milliner.

The dinner-hour arrived, and Walsingham was punctual to his time. Julia was present, and to her he directed his conversation.

“I saw,” he began, “your charming companion reading a novel this morning, and I took upon myself to recommend her other pursuits.”

“She would gladly listen, I am sure,” replied Julia, “to any advice one so well qualified as yourself might please to give.”

Walsingham bowed, and continued—“I took the liberty because I have always thought that the passion for romances and novels originate in a morbid, fluttering, fidgetty curiosity, and produces a sickly sensibility of mind, which is equally adverse to the acquisition of useful knowledge and sound morality. Now, useful knowledge tends to the realisation of wealth, and to the proper disposition of time.”

“Humph!” said Walsingham to himself; “that is what the sailors call, getting to windward of the lady.”

“I am quite of your opinion,” replied Julia: “and when time is properly occupied, it en-

hances domestic felicity, and makes life desirable."

"We read in the works of the great French philosopher," continued Walsingham, "'Les plaisirs ne sont pas assez solides pour souffrir qu'on les approfondisse ; il ne faut que les effleurer. Ils ressemblent à ces terres marécageuses sur lesquelles on est obligé de courir légèrement, sans y arrêter jamais le pied.' But with all due deference and respect to so great an authority, I think that by the proper disposition of time, life may be spent so as to make each moment a pleasure ; and I cannot but think that your view is more consonant with comfort than the words of the philosopher."

"Do you, gay as you are, Mr. Walsingham, find time to devote to study ?" asked Julia.

"Study !" interrupted Douglass ; "why, he is a real bookworm : he repeated half Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy to me, and I caught him poring over the Bible with more application than half the bench of bishops."

"The Bible !" ejaculated Amelia, who had

paid great attention to the conversation ; and then she said to herself, "Then my suspicions, thank God, cannot be true."

"Is there anything *very* extraordinary," replied Walsingham, addressing Amelia, "in a man and a Christian reading the sacred writings? I am sorry *Miss Stanhope* formed so bad an opinion of one who has endeavoured to emulate her virtue and her religion."

"That 's a shot between wind and water," continued the villain to himself.

Amelia blushed, and said, "I am sure, Mr. Walsingham, you will forgive my rudeness. I was quite aware from your talent that you devoted much time to study ; but I did not think that at present, during the *day*, you read that book."

"Indeed your suspicions, *Miss Stanhope*, are founded on fact ; for I have latterly placed you upon the shrine, and spent my days and nights in worshipping an angel."

"Now," replied Amelia with some vivacity, "I really do not believe you ; for that compliment was at the expense of truth."

“I assure you, Miss Stanhope, you are again mistaken; and you will find, I hope, the longer we are acquainted, that no fervent Catholic ever bent knee to the figure of the Virgin with greater adoration than I kneel at the shrine of Truth. Do you remember those beautiful lines, which form a prayer I often offer up?—

“Before thy mystic altar, heavenly Truth,
I kneel in manhood, as I knelt in youth.
Thus let me kneel, till this dull form decay,
And life's last shade be brighten'd by thy ray;
Then shall my soul, now lost in clouds below,
Soar without bounds, without consuming glow.”*

“How very beautiful!” said Amelia, whilst her eyes were directed towards Walsingham. Julia looked at Robert, and Robert understood the meaning: it was a confession of admiration so near *love*, that even Douglass, absorbed as he was with plans for the evening, understood it well; it was one of those glances which are only given when the mind is concentrated upon one object, and that object a human being. From this moment there appeared in Amelia a more anxious wish to listen

* Sir W. Jones.

than to talk: and some impudent fellows have asserted, that whenever a woman can forego her disposition to chatter for the gratification of listening, she must be very much in love with the speaker. Walsingham had now surrounded himself in a kind of impregnable fortress which the blind eye of love could never penetrate: both Julia and Amelia looked upon him as a man sincere in principle, moral in his behaviour, charming in his discourse; his attention was devotedness, and he acted his part so beautifully that he began to fancy himself in love.

Conversation, in which Walsingham led the van, was occasionally relieved by the dishes,—for, as Dr. Johnson says, “the uniformity of the world must be sometimes diversified, and the vacuity of conversation sometimes supplied,”—until the jolly hour of reinvigoration had passed. At this dinner all the party regarded Walsingham with greater respect; for his conversation, although occasionally light, seemed always to bear the impress of truth, and he never hazarded a remark which malice could twist into

levity. The cards were brought, and Amelia was at once disarmed from all suspicion by Walsingham saying, "My dear Robert, I think it quite unfair that you should always supply the cards; so I have thrown in a pack or two this morning." But had not the girl been blind, she would have remarked, at least to herself, "Then why *change* the cards—why remove so many packs to replace them by others?" But the idea escaped her: she really believed him honourable and sincere; and it might be that she would not now have resented a kiss as she foolishly did, or more foolishly publish it to the world. There was a look of recognition, as much as to say, "This begins the match;" and forthwith the cards were dealt.

When once a suspicion is excited, it requires confirmation strong as holy writ before it is subdued. Thus Amelia, having once imbibed the notion that there must have been something premeditated, could not, even with all the compliments which had been lavished, entirely rid herself of the suspicion.

"I shall," she said to Walsingham, "take a

lesson from your mode of playing ; so let me sit close to you. You need not fear ; my countenance will not betray a good hand, or sadden at a bad one ; and although I am a woman, I shall not say a word."

" You seem, Mimie, my dear," replied Douglass, " to know one of the six inherent failings of your sex ; and let us see if you can master it."

The first thing that struck Amelia was the sullen manner in which this proposition was received. True love never can be too close ; and Amelia thought that Walsingham might as well have said something more than, " As you please, Miss Stanhope." The next observation she made was the peculiar manner in which Walsingham shuffled the cards, and the expression of surprise which he could not conceal when he evidently found that the cards were not those which he had substituted. He gave one game out of seven, and he lost the first ; making two against him.

" These cards run against me," he said ; " let us change them :" and he got up himself, went

to the card-box, and brought two more packs. Amelia's face had grown quite pale, and she looked ill ; which Julia, who sat by her husband, and who watched his play, perceived. Again did Amelia remark the peculiar manner, and again she saw the same disappointed look and angry scowl which grew over his features. He then began to shuffle the cards in such a manner as to see them. This, however, was unnoticed by Amelia ; and although a king did occasionally turn up, yet such was the general run of good luck which for a wonder seemed to grow to Douglass, that for the first time since he began this certain ruin, private play, he found himself a winner.

The sharp manner of Walsingham did not escape Amelia : she saw the man who had spoken of the benefit of 'keeping one's temper' not a little agitated ; and as he had declared himself to her a beggar on two thousand a year, and knowing the match was for one, she inwardly hoped this practical lesson would wean him from high play, and teach him to be contented with his lot.

Douglass instantly offered him his revenge, but Walsingham refused it, begging Amelia to play, which she instantly did ; but she watched her lover's closely, and he amused himself shuffling the pack.

The time soon came when the ladies proposed to retire in order to dress themselves. Walsingham seized the opportunity of Amelia's absence, and challenged Robert to play another partie for two thousand ;—it was agreed, played, and won by Walsingham. The game ran even until four all ; when Walsingham dealt, and the king was turned up.

It was during a slight paroxysm of rage, which Robert could not control, that the ladies entered. Both were dressed exactly alike, and both had taken every precaution to secure themselves against detection. For some time both gentlemen regarded them with scrutiny : it was impossible to discover the difference of colour in the eyes, but Walsingham saw the jessamine blossom, and in passing to dress, he took the hand of her who wore it, and gave it a most sentimental squeeze. No sooner had they shut

the door than Julia reported progress, and asked if Walsingham always gave those very tender squeezes. Both laughed, and made up during the absence of the men for the silence they had sworn to observe previous to going into the room.

Soon the gentlemen were ready, and both came in unmasked. The dominos were exactly the same ; but as no suspicion had been excited concerning their determination—for the conversation overheard by Amelia was too vague to admit of any positive conclusion,—Walsingham asked for the tickets, the carriage was announced, and Julia was handed by him to the vehicle.

CHAPTER X.

WALSINGHAM, by way of putting the matter right, began the conversation about the carriage, saying, "that his coachman was a kind of owl, and was never known to be indisposed during the night ; that he was hardly ever used during the day, and that, like all half-worked animals, he was getting fat and lazy."

The carriage whisked round one corner, then flew round another ; and after ten minutes' driving, it drove into the court-yard of the Salon, and the party alighted. In the ante-room the tickets were given, and the ladies, taking each other's arm, walked into the receiving room. The different commissioners bowed, but none spoke ; and thus passing into the circular room, they were fortunate enough to find a sofa disengaged, and they sat down.

In this room was the dancing ;—here were grave-looking Turks waltzing with Sisters of Charity,—harlequins lacking activity, and clowns seriously dull. Even in France a masquerade seems a dismal affair ; one would imagine that the company wore the pasteboard blind in order to slink into their own selves, and to enjoy solitude in the presence of thousands. The music had begun,—the giddy waltz was at its height : Walsingham whispered to Julia, believing her to be Amelia, and asked her to dance.

The lady responded in a feigned voice, that she was a stranger to that dance, and that it appeared neither graceful, elegant, nor decent.

“ This,” replied Walsingham, “ is sheer fastidiousness ; nothing shows more beautifully the elegant figure of a woman, and surely the simple affair of supporting a lady could hardly be termed indecent. Indeed, dearest Amelia,” he said, “ one possessing your angelic symmetry might venture, robed as you are now, without the slightest indelicacy ; for so long has that envied domino — envied, since it covers your person — been made, that one might as well

have looked for a foot belonging to a Queen of Spain, and incurred as great a penalty in finding it."

"I cannot comprehend you," replied Julia. "Do Spanish women wear their dresses so long? See! there is a nun with petticoats—if any—short enough for an opera-dancer."

"She has chosen some country peasant's costume. For Madame Daunoy, in her Memoirs upon Spain, mentions 'that the Spanish women thought no favour so great as to show their gallants their *feet*: it was high treason to speak of the queen's legs.' And an instance is recorded of the wife of Charles the Second, who was thrown from her horse, but whose foot was retained in the stirrup. A cavalier seeing the accident, ran to her assistance; but having unfortunately, in disentangling her, touched her leg, he was instantly condemned to transportation. It was such a transport to touch it, that had you been her, *I* would willingly have undergone the pleasure and the penalty."

"I really cannot waltz," resumed Julia; "not from any apprehension of showing my feet,

but because such tetotum twirling would make me giddy : but ask Julia."

"No, no," replied Walsingham ; " my attentions I dedicate to you. Married women should never dance ; their figures are always spoilt by having children. And besides, although I like her, I have no hesitation in saying I adore you.—You really must allow me to support that taper waist, and feel your light angelic figure."

"No, Mr. Walsingham ; flattered as I may be," replied Julia, " with your compliments, yet waltz I will not : but I will dance the first quadrille with you. I must tell Julia," she continued, " of my intentions,"—and she whispered in the ear of Amelia a slight account of the progress of deception. In the mean time, Douglass, believing that he was destined to sit by his wife, and a little soured by his loss, began to Amelia his remarks.

"That fellow Walsingham is playing the agreeable to that weather-hen Amelia ; and she is coquetting and flirting with him prodigiously. I begin to wish she was away—back in England,

or that Charles would come over here. You women are so cursed unmanageable when you are in love!"

"Did you find me so, dear Robert," replied Amelia, "before you married me?"

"No; you were steadier than Amelia; and I never found you giving me permission to take a kiss, and then making a virtue of mentioning it: there was something like mischief-making or deception in that! 'Faith, I believe she would as soon kiss Walsingham as not!"

"You wrong her, Robert!" replied the girl, her face firing with the sudden blush which had flown to it, and almost consumed the mask which fortunately concealed it: "but I dare say you would not mind kissing her a little."

"Nonsense!" replied Robert; "she is like a sister to me; and kissing them is as insipid as eating cold veal without salt."

"Now, confess, Robert,—did you never kiss her, insipid as it might be?"

"Never, by heavens! I would as soon think of kissing a cow. She is in my eyes neither handsome, accomplished, nor pleasing;—her

manners are those of a hoyden spoilt child ; and one might as well use a pea-shooter for a telescope, as extract either sense or propriety from such a *girouette*."

"That *is* pleasant," thought Amelia to herself: "Listeners never hear any good of themselves, is as old as the hills, and as true as the gospel. But now I will try *him*."

"I believe you are more right than wrong in your conclusions of Amelia," she began ; "but what think you of Walsingham ? Is he sincere in his affections ? or is he, like the rest of you, ready to pledge his soul for any woman to ransom ?"

"I think he is rather smitten," replied Douglass ; "and I pity him if ever he marries her,—she will lead him a devil of a life ! She is, like quicksilver, eternally on the *move*, and consequently can never make a *steady* wife." And he laughed at his own conceit.

Just at this moment, Julia whispered to Amelia the conversation with Walsingham ; and she, in return, discovered that she had been tolerated rather than welcomed.

The waltz had ceased ; and Walsingham, anxious to secure a place, gave his hand to his fancied Amelia, and led her to the dance : but, some difficulty arising from each party being pre-engaged, Robert consented to walk through a dance with his own wife, and in blessed ignorance led Amelia opposite Julia. Very little conversation occurred during the quadrille ; numbers had crowded upon numbers, and the ear of a man was not far from the ear of the next lady.

In these exhibitions the English in general are very averse to being thought English ; and not unfrequently they take the surest mode of detection, that of speaking French : whereas if they mutilated their own “grunting, guttural language,” they might succeed better than in speaking through the mouth what ought to be sounded through the nose. However, few remarked, for few cared : those gay Lotharios who had previously made assignations knew their ladies by some secret device, and it only required to see them walk the dance to know what place had the honour of their births.

There is a light fantastic kind of tiptoe exhibition which a French person cannot disguise ; it is a national mark, stamped as strongly on their feet as the broad countenance of a Tartar on his barbarian visage.

If a French woman were dancing in the garb of a sultana, she would put her hands in the same position as a poodle dog when told to beg ; and when the Catholic religion shall give place to another, perhaps that of the Twirlers and Jumpers would be most convenient to their conscience, and the easiest to understand. No sooner, therefore, did Julia and Amelia move in the first figure than they were noted as English and regarded as such. They walked exactly alike ; and Walsingham, who seized the eight-bar licence to talk which a quadrille affords, commenced by wondering “ how his dear Amelia could so easily imitate the rather ungraceful step of her friend Julia.”

“ Nothing is easier,” replied Julia ; “ we are nearly of an age, and I always thought we walked in the same manner.”

“ A most amazing blindness, my dear Ame-

lia, on your part ! One has all the elasticity of unwedded youth ; the other, the stately gravity of the mother. Dress yourselves anyhow and you could not deceive me ; for Love, they say, is blind,—and yet no one possesses such piercing, jealous eyes as the little god.”

“ Hush !” said Julia, apprehensive that they might be overheard.

Douglass, imagining he had his wife to dance with, did not undergo the fatigue of making conversation ; and when the music ceased, he led her to the same sofa on which was seated his old adviser, the old gentleman who sat next to him at the dinner. He was watching the different ladies, and seeing one approach, he made way for her, and the three were seated. The elderly gentleman cast a scrutinizing glance at his neighbours : the lady he evidently did not know, but there was something in the manner of Douglass which seemed to recall him to his memory.

At masquerade the approach of any man is allowed, providing the conversation is such that delicacy is not shocked, or the prerogative of

women assailed. The old gentleman began in French, and Amelia, who was no proficient in the language, hazarded a reply.

“Ah! English,” replied the stranger; “I thought I saw you dance: I judged only from that and the voice; for French women, although they keep their mouths full of bonbons, have not the sweetest intonation, and they cannot refrain from dancing whenever they hear the squeak of a fiddle.”

The compliment tempted Amelia to continue the dialogue, which she did by asking “if he knew who was the pretty figure dressed as a gipsy.”

“I imagine,” he replied, “it is a lady whose form might warrant the imitation of La Esmeralda, but whose virtue would rather lose by the comparisou. I suppose that brilliant officer is intended for her Phœbus: he will look brighter by and bye, when he gets near the gaming-table.”

“What!” interrupted Amelia, “is there a gaming-table *here*?” and the stress she laid

upon the word occasioned the reply of the old gentleman.

“*Here!*” said he as Douglass gave a gentle and a useless nudge; “*here!*—why, where do you think you are? This is the superior pandemonium of Paris—the Salon of Rthe ue de Richelieu—the licensed plunder abode of the rich and the unwary. How do you think this midnight revelry is paid for, but from the pockets of the company? This is the house which made Cavendish a villain, and Houghton a suicide.”

A thrill of horror ran through Amelia, which communicated itself to Douglass; and who, believing it to be his wife who had procured the unwelcome intelligence, sat motionless like a black statue as he felt the hand of Amelia passed through his arm as if to cover for shelter.

“In what street, did you say, sir?” said Amelia, her voice faltering into its natural tone, which convinced Douglass of the deception which had been practised, and came to restore his presence of mind.

“In what street?” replied the elderly gentleman; “why, in the Rue de Richelieu, exactly opposite the Hôtel des Princes, the second door from the Boulevard. There, madam, is latitude and longitude, bearings and distance, as the sailors say.” And before he could continue his answer more than to say, “that it was a place where all the vices congregated, and where even the figure of Esmeralda might be purchased,” he rose from his seat, and addressing a lady in French, withdrew.

“Amelia, *Amelia*,” said Douglass, “your anxiety has betrayed you; for *I* cannot be deceived in *your voice*. Hear me, listen to me, and as you would spare Julia the dreadful shock she would undergo did she discover the deception which has been practised, promise me never to allow one word of this to escape your lips. I am alone to blame; my cursed disposition to gaming led me to urge Walsingham to get the tickets. Nay, when he first introduced me here, which was long previous to your arrival, he warned me of the threatening danger; and I it was who overcame all his

arguments against it — who dissipated his scruples even this very morning as to the circuitous route we were to take before we drove into the court-yard. And now most sincerely do I wish I had listened to his excellent advice : he warned me that some cursed unexpected rencontre would discover the whole, and urged me again and again not to come myself, or to allow your curiosity to be gratified in such a place.”

“Robert ! Robert ! where have you brought us ! Why, it is a den of infamy, where no honest woman ought to appear. Cannot you take us home immediately ?”

“Impossible,” he replied ; “Julia would then discover and despise me. I pledged my word after my first serious losses never to enter this door again ; and now not only to have violated my own sacred promise, but to have made her an eye-witness to my guilt, would distract her. No ; let the evening go on—let Fate do her worst. In this room are many of the most exemplary of the metropolis, guided, like you, by mere curiosity : but do you promise me, for

your word is not broken, never to mention this ; and on you," he said as he took her hand, "surely, surely, dearest Amelia, I may rely."

"I promise," she said. "Now answer me this,—did Walsingham really warn you from this place?"

"Indeed, my dear Amelia, he did ; and had you heard him when in his glowing terms he spoke of the ruin which might follow—when he addressed me as a husband and a father, you would not think your affections misplaced. Nay, Amelia, do not start so ;—I have watched you both—I have seen the tell-tale eyes sparkling with delight—and I observed to-day at dinner the expression of gratification which you betrayed when you heard of his studies and his occupations. You told me something of warning me from my destruction : he was that warning voice which spoke in vain."

That Amelia really loved Walsingham, although she had for a moment harboured what she now considered a base ungenerous thought, there can be no doubt. The confirmation from Douglass's lips of his honourable conduct

dissipated all apprehension, and she was anxious enough for the return of Julia in order to possess the jessamine, and to hear from his own lips the declaration she anticipated in consequence of the morning's conversation.

When the dance was finished, Walsingham led Julia to a small room which is beyond the rouge-et-noir apartment ; and that room—for the excitement was elsewhere—was vacant. They sat down on a sofa only calculated to hold two ; and Walsingham, taking her hand, commenced thus : “Thank heavens, Amelia ! I have now an opportunity of a little *tête-à-tête* with you, not likely to be disturbed by any.” Julia attempted to withdraw her hand ; but the squeeze was so warm and affectionate, that she, poor soul ! was soon overcome. “Nay, nay,” continued Walsingham, “my dear, this is treating me unkindly ; you surely would not wish to extinguish a flame your own bright self has created : nay, you are too generous, and, I hope, too much disinclined.” (Here Julia hung down her head, almost bursting with an inclination to laugh, but which prudence controlled.)

Walsingham having tempted her to look at him, he endeavoured to catch her eye through the green gauze she had placed over the holes in the mask : his were those of immodest desire—an indescribable look, half melting in moisture, and yet glaring with fire : it is a look which none can imitate—none describe. “Amelia,” he continued, “surely I need not repeat what you must have felt. I love you, fondly, sincerely, truly, and often do I dream of dear delights perhaps never to be mine. Answer me, my own Amelia,—my long-loved charming girl : am I to be fortunate in possessing that which monarchs might envy?” Julia acted well ; hung down her head, flourished her handkerchief, forgetting she had a mask, and put it to her eyes, forgetting there was a veil of gauze to impede its utility :—it was a kind of confirmation that her heart and head were so occupied that she had forgotten all but Walsingham and her tears. He continued,

“That silence is the eloquence of consent. And now, dearest girl, to think of all the pas-

sion of unshackled love ; to think with that great master of human feelings—

‘ Oh, happy state ! when souls each other draw,—
When love is liberty, and nature law !’

No foolish tie—sanctified indeed, by mere human breath, binding two people together, the very bonds of which are the first inducement to our nature to struggle to be free. No, dearest ; you, I know, would rather say with Eloisa,—that fond, that impassioned creature, whose love could never die, because it never was tied and bound by the officious churchman,—

‘ Should at my feet the world’s great master fall,
Himself, his throne, his power, I ’d scorn them all.
Not Cæsar’s Empress would I deign to prove :
No ! make me *mistress* to the man I love.’ ”

Julia withdrew her hand as if she had been stung by a viper. She had scarcely heeded the first sentence, but the force, the eloquence of the last line—the uncontrolled expression he gave to the word “mistress,” startled her to attention. She arose instantly, and, without say-

ing a word, was about to withdraw : he seized her arm and again urged her to be seated. “Nay, listen,” he began, “my dearest Amelia : see what misery springs from marriage ; look at your own friend Julia, ——” She interrupted him instantly.

“Oh, they are happy, happy in the very bonds which bind them together ! She has no wish ungratified ; her heart is the repository of all his cares, of all his wants, of all his desires.”

“Stop, stop,” resumed Walsingham ; “you are sadly deceived — sadly mistaken : she is as ignorant of the ruin which threatens her as the babe unborn. He dupes her by fine words and promises ; he regards her as an ignorant creature, who has not courage to listen to that which would scare her from this metropolis. Does she know where she is at this moment ?”

“Away, away, Mr. Walsingham ! you cannot thus deceive me ; you cannot, paint the ruin how you will, make me believe that he would be unmarried to-morrow, or that Julia could harbour one thought against the man she loves,

—the man to whom she clings for succour and support ; and how dare you, sir, to think that I would sacrifice my virtue to you ?”

“ In the eye of Heaven,” he coolly answered, “ we should be married.”

“ And why not, then,” replied Julia, “ in the eye of society ? What ! would you wish to bring the girl who loved you to be a by-word and a scorn—to be an outcast from the world,—to tremble when the eye of virtue recognised her as the low, degraded, scorned, helpless woman, she then would be ? And, Mr. Walsingham, since you have selected your quotations from a poem our sex is almost forbidden to read, allow me to offer you this, from a more virtuous writer, and addressed to a monarch. ‘ A woman,’ says Lord Clarendon, ‘ who prostitutes herself to a king, is equally infamous to all women of honour, and must expect the same contempt from them as if she were common to mankind ; and that no enemy he (Charles II.) had, could advise him a more sure way to lose the hearts and affections of the people than the indulging himself in such licentiousness.’ Now answer

me, sir, how dare you insult me as you have done ; and your reason why, when you own your love, you refuse to marry me.”

“ On account of my father, dearest Amelia. I told you of my difference with him on the score of marriage ; and I feared and still fear his discovery if I should marry. I had the intention of fulfilling a promise of marriage at his death, but, since I find you so adverse to my proposition, I am ready to be married in secret, and here offer my hand. I do not wish,” continued the scoundrel, “ to shock your modesty ; it was offered in a moment of haste and eagerness, and you will forgive the words of which a man so passionately in love as I am may unintentionally avail himself. It is the dread that my father may in his anger cut me off with a shilling, and leave me nothing but what the law enforces him to do, that prompts this ; as the estate without some other assistance would be a weight more calculated to sink me, than to make me free to ramble at discretion. Again, Amelia, let me implore you to think kindly of me, and allow that I have had some reason in my madness.”

“Tell me, Mr. Walsingham,” replied Julia, “what makes you think that Julia and her husband are unhappy, and that he deceives her? for I should have said from my own observation that no two people seemed fonder of each other—that little link of affection, the boy, keeping the chain firmer and closer together.”

“You ladies, dear Amelia,” he replied, “although blessed with eyes which might deaden the rays of the sun, see occasionally very indistinctly. Julia regards him with the look of affection, and she does not see the worm which is devouring him: his love is a very secondary affair with him,—his whole thought,—his whole absorbing idea—mind, I trust this to you as a secret—is *gaming*.”

“Gaming!” replied Julia, trembling in every limb, “gaming! why, Mr. Walsingham, if such is the case, where does he gratify his wish?”

“*Here*,” said Walsingham, “here in *this* house.”

“In this house!” continued Julia; “why, this house you told me was hired for the night

in order to give this masquerade, which you further remarked was a liberal act in the strangers now resident in Paris."

"I did, I believe, dearest Amelia, say something to that amount; but in all French societies *like this*, there are gaming tables, and he will be there, I dare say, losing thousands. I have warned him against it; but he is dead to all counsel, all advice."

"Let us return and keep close to him," replied Julia in a trepidation, which again might have betrayed her.

"No, no, my angel, let us profit by this moment to enjoy each other's conversation; before long every corner of the house will be crammed; but tell me, Amelia, answer me sincerely, for none can know the value of the answer but he who feels as I do. Your love, my own sweet girl, confess it mine, and I am satisfied; nay, *say* so—do not nod your head, or look so downcast, as if you were ashamed of confessing what I have a right to ask."

"Mr. Walsingham, surely you do not desire me to say what you must have known."

“Nay, Amelia,” he continued, (again warming,) “you must say the word.”

“Then (oh ! heavens, do not think the worse of me for my candid avowal !) I *do* love you.”

“She shall be mine yet,” said Walsingham to himself; and then turning towards her, said, “Thank you, thank you, dearest Amelia; my future conduct shall convince you how sincerely I love you. And now let me exhort you to listen to my proposition relative to the secret marriage.”

“Oh, spare me now,” replied the eager Julia; “do, pray, Mr. Walsingham, return to Robert; they will think it so odd, our long absence. Come, sir, *I* insist,—as *yet* *I* am to be obliged.” So saying, she rose from her seat, and her obsequious lover, willing perhaps to coax Robert into a little play in order to keep up the excitement, yet determined not to allow him to sacrifice much, he well knowing that private play would suit him best, rose from his seat, and drawing the hand of Julia through his arm, he patted it affectionately, saying, “How long, I wonder, will you keep me from all the joys I must experience when this small hand is mine !”

She merely responded with an intimation to keep such conversation for less crowded rooms ; and then pushing their way through a set of opera-dancers who had congregated together, and by means of elbowing some solemn Turk, or jostling some Franciscan friar, they reached the sofa at the conclusion of the conversation mentioned before, Robert merely advising Amelia to be cautious. At the meeting both stood up ; Robert turned Walsingham away to whisper his intentions, during which time Amelia proposed that she should have the jessamine blossom ; but before this could be done, the gentlemen again turned round. Julia was in the middle of whispering that she had accepted Walsingham, and began to speak of the secret marriage ; so far, therefore, Amelia was informed of her destiny, and now she was willing to hear the repetition. Forgetting that she had not the flower, she said in an artificial voice, " Come, Mr. Walsingham, it is now my turn to dance with you ; I have no idea, indeed, of my pretty friend occupying all your time : " and she took Walsingham's arm and walked in

the very room in which Julia had been seated. The sofa was unoccupied, and they soon took possession. Before their conversation is related, the reader will bear in mind that Julia having once secured her husband, was determined not to let him out of her sight. She, therefore, kept him in conversation relative to the dancers; and as no mistake could occur between them, Robert knowing her to be his wife, the remarks were either listened to without being answered, or answered when it was evident they had not been heard.

“I am afraid, Mrs. Douglass, that this scene of idle amusement can hardly gratify *you*,” said Walsingham (he being determined to be a most frigid exemplary young gentleman); “and if it were not to satisfy the bursting curiosity of your lively friend, Miss Stanhope, I should have preferred the pleasure of your quiet sociable evenings to this horrid exhibition of half-naked females. I really feel inclined to place the advice of the French philosopher upon a board and walk about as if I was one of the bill-stickers of Paris.”

“And what may that be?” said Amelia, whose ravished ears stretched with excitement. She was sitting, be it remembered, by her avowed lover, her future husband, and now was to form her idea of him from the conversation addressed to an apparently indifferent person.

“He well remarks,” continued Walsingham, “‘*Si les femmes sentaient leurs intérêts, elles sauraient combien la modestie, la décence les embellit, et, au contraire, combien la hardiesse et l’affectation des airs les enlaidit, et dégoûte les hommes de leur commerce.*’”

“It is very true, no doubt,” replied Amelia; “but it is neither the fashion to wear high dresses, nor is it very consistent with youth to be as grave as a judge, or as pensive as a poet.”

“True, Mrs. Douglass,” replied Walsingham; “nor is it quite so easy to come up to the standard of his excellence. He remarks, ‘*Il faut qu’une jeune fille soit simple et modeste dans sa parure, égale, douce, honnête, et d’une humeur complaisante; avec de l’esprit, et de la raison.*’ But you, Mrs. Douglass, realize the beauty such a desirable combination might form.”

“Thank you, Mr. Walsingham ; and in which of these is my companion, Amelia, deficient?”

“Perhaps in no one,” continued he ; “but there is a careless levity about her which is excusable in youth, and yet which Mrs. Douglass at nearly the same age has learnt to discard. She is deficient in that excellent consistency of conduct which is so remarkable in yourself : for instance, she would enjoy any badinage of conversation better than that which tends to instruct as well as to amuse.”

Amelia bit her lip until it nearly bled ; and she inwardly thanked the mask which concealed the glow of anger she could not control.

“But come, Mr. Walsingham, surely you admire the beauty, the grace, the raven hair, the light, the graceful step of Amelia. She is so natural in her manner, so much above art, and has so much more *elasticity* in her walk than I have : besides, her eyes dark as jet — ”

“Stop, stop, Mrs. Douglass ; in her personal beauty it must indeed be a fastidious man to discover a fault.” (Amelia glowed with delight.)

“No, no ; I doubt if he of Sicily who painted the famous Venus could have selected a fairer form or lovelier face. It is true her nose is a little retroussé, and her ears are not over round : but I look to the mind ; I would have her pursue literature as a study as well as a pleasure : I would have her emulate you, Mrs. Douglass, in the employment of time, and in domestic enjoyment. ‘*Le bonheur domestique est à la longue le plus solide, et le plus doux.*”

“Well, I dare say,” replied Amelia, not a little piqued, “she will profit by your advice and your example ; but take care you do not make her a blue-belle, who, when you ask her about some of the occurrences of life, stops your domestic felicity by asking in what year the Argonautic expedition sailed.”

“I fear she is not much inclined to listen to me ; although I once thought that I, who loved her with a purity of love seldom witnessed, who looked forward to a marriage with her as a step leading to a reconciliation with my father,—for when I am married, I think his anger will change to delight, — might have

gained her esteem, if not her affections. You will forgive me, Mrs. Douglass, mentioning this to you in such a place ; but your mask saves the embarrassment, and we speak as if we were in the dark, with only virtue and honour for our guides.”

CHAPTER XI.

A WEEK had elapsed since Charles Stanhope had paid the visit of condolence and charity to old Jenkins, and he now meditated another trip. The weather had been wet, cold, and raw, and notwithstanding our strange mode of passing the summers in cities, and winters amongst leafless trees, damp lawns, boggy lanes, cheerless fields, short days and dark nights, Stanhope had contrived, in spite of the frigid indifference and lazy habits of his wife, to spend his time profitably ; but scarcely an hour had passed without his wishing again to see the poor old unfortunate man. He felt, however, satisfied that he had left him a sufficient sum to enable him to surmount the difficulties of his situation,—to buy the wherewithal to cover his children, and replenish the almost exhausted

draw which contained the hemp, which alone constituted the occupation of his dame. The sun was visible, for a wonder,—the murkiness, the fog of the morning had been dissipated, and Stanhope, resolving not to allow another day to pass without fulfilling his charitable intention, mentioned the subject thus :

“ Margaret, my love ! I have ordered the horses ; we *must*” (and he laid a stress upon the word, which was sufficient to show he apprehended a slight opposition) “ ride over to poor old Jenkins and see his daughter.”

“ Indeed,” replied this drone, “ I cannot go to-day. I feel more inclined to remain at home : it is so much trouble to get dressed, and the ride is long ; and no amusement when we have tired ourselves for nothing.”

“ Nothing !” exclaimed Charles ; “ is it nothing to clothe the naked, and to feed the hungry, — to comfort those in distress, and alleviate the misfortunes of our neighbours ? Is it nothing, to extend our charity to those in want—to hear the prayers of the old, and to see the smiles of the young, praying for our pro-

sperity, and blessing our benevolence? Come, come, Margaret, you must shake off this general lassitude of yours. I know your heart is good ; but, I am afraid," he added, with a smile, for Margaret appeared moved at his earnestness, " your liver is bad. Come, military obedience, madam ; your servant awaits *your* orders,—the horses will be here in a quarter of an hour ; so away, and remember this : ' Despatch is the soul of business.' "

Margaret moved, it was true, but not in double-quick time ; she left her work, if sticking a few threads of worsted into a piece of canvass can be called *work*, upon the table : half a score of penny skeins were scattered about the room, and the whole wore that uncomfortable appearance which the best of apartments would exhibit when a lazy woman nominally governs the establishment, and the duty of the superior is neglected, and the inferiors avail themselves of the same inattention. Charles looked round the room when his wife had quitted it ; and he sighed—he sighed, poor man, when he thought how little energy was required to make a house

comfortable, and how eagerly the bad example of the mistress was followed in the maid.

The horses came, and after waiting about an hour for his wife, Charles placed her in the saddle, and they started off, taking the well-known road to the cottage. They rode in silence, for Charles's mind was too much occupied with the scene of woe he knew he must face; and Margaret pouted her pretty lips, and was moody—nay, if a woman is ever so, sulky. They arrived at the cottage, but a far different scene awaited them. A certain degree of comfort was visible; the floor was nicely sanded, the fagot sparkled and crackled on the hearth, some plates and dishes stood in regular lines clean and in good order. A girl about fifteen was occupied in arranging the different furniture: but, before the fire, and in the same chair, was the crazy woman,—she was turning the wheel and pinching the hemp; and when Charles stood before her, he was almost petrified at the cold insensible eye which was fixed for a moment upon him. She turned away after giving a kind of maniac smile, singing,

‘ Oh, where shall I my true love find ? ’”

“ Little girl !” said Charles ; “ where is old Jenkins ?”

“ He’s working in the garden, sir. Shall I call him ?”

“ Do so, my pretty little creature ;” and she departed on her errand, thinking Charles the handsomest man she had ever seen. Jenkins soon returned ; his face convinced Charles that a great change had taken place for the better ; and in his warmth and anxiety he at once desired the old man to say what friendly hand had been extended toward him.

Jenkins, after the first salutation, pointed to heaven and said, “ It is there, sir,—there ; *He* has been pleased to smile upon us. My daughter Susan is recovered so much, that she comes home to-day ; and my boy, sir,—my poor sailor boy,—is gone to fetch her. Oh, sir, he is such a man !—he is like ’em all, brave, generous, and forgiving. Dear heart ! how you would have startled to see him, who has been before death these last six years, a-crying like a child when he heard his mother singing that song about Susan. I feel so lightsome like, I feel quite

young again. And see, sir, how my other child has put us all to rights : and dame, sir, she is so much recovered, that every now and then she knows us all ; and we sits down, and, ‘ Dame,’ says I, ‘ which is your son ?’ and she points to John—then I says, and I always shiver like when I asks her, ‘ Dame, which is your old man ?’ and she knows me, sir, thank God that she does, bless her old heart !” And the poor fellow passed the sleeve of his jacket across his eyes.

Stanhope turned to Margaret, and took her hand. She looked quite unconcerned ; but when Stanhope proposed for them to go home, the natural curiosity of the woman overcame her habitual coolness, and she expressed a wish to remain to see Susan, and likewise,—not that she mentioned this,—to see the sailor. Stanhope entered into the feelings of the old man, and his generous heart warmed at the prospect of brighter days for the honest, hard-working father.

“ Well, Jenkins,” he began, “ let us hope that the worst is past, and that now all will be

right. I have got a nice cottage for you, and when I go abroad, I shall beg you to go occasionally and look after my little garden. But has any medical man told you to bring your daughter back? because it sometimes happens that it makes people in your wife's state rather worse than better."

"Oh, yes, sir, thank you, the doctor as lives in the village said he thought it would do dame good, and that it would assist in the recovery of the girl, if she was made comfortable at home. So, sir, we are all about our different businesses now; we are going to put up a bed in that corner, and we got a screen like, and we shall be together again."

"But I wanted you, Jenkins, to move over at once to Giles Cottage, close to my gate; it has been put in order for you, everything is clean and nice, and you will have more room and a better garden."

"I think, Jenkins," said Margaret, "you had better do that, and take advantage of this fine day."

"Lord love your pretty face, ma'am! I did

not dare speak to you ; but now I hear the voice of kindness from such a lady, I do think that I could live twenty years more to pray for your happiness—bless you, ma'am, bless you !"—and at that moment the old woman was loquacious, and said, " Bless you !"

Jenkins went to the door, and he clapped his old hands together, fixing his fingers in an attitude of prayer, and exclaimed, " Here they come, my own boy and his darling sister ! I am glad you are here, sir, for I think it will stop my daughter from being too much overpowered like, because she won't be quite so much herself, as I might say, when she sees your pretty lady ; and if we can only get her used to dame for five or six minutes, perhaps she may not cry so much, for she has a good heart ; and she has sorrowed much for her crime."

Margaret looked out, and at some distance she saw the sailor leading his sister. He had taken her by the hand, and was, to use a sailor's expression, towing her against wind and tide ; for as they neared the cottage Susan became more reluctant to advance, and her bro-

ther was actually dragging her along. At last, on perceiving the horses, they both stopped. Margaret mentioned this to old Jenkins, who forthwith despatched the little girl, desiring them to come home, and that the gentleman and lady were those who had assisted them so much. Whereupon, after a little conversation, in which the sailor's arms were flying about as if they did not belong to him, he took hold of Susan's arm, and they advanced. Susan then looked about nineteen ; she was of moderate height, possessing a beautiful figure, with lively black eyes, rather a sharp yet pretty countenance, and a profusion of dark hair, which she wore in ringlets. Her dress was that of a neat country girl ; and it was evident that her shoes had been selected with care, and that the shawl which partially concealed her pretty form had been one of those many gifts which had led to her ruin. So true it is, that in the lower ranks of life the *means* of gratifying vanity may be withstood ; but the actual dress itself, the decorated bonnet or the handsome shawl, are fatal. She wore a common cottage bonnet, and her coun-

tenance, although pale and betraying sorrow, was that of a very pretty young woman.

The sailor approached with the unsteady step of a seaman. He was about sixteen—a fine-grown lad of his age. His dark hair came in great profusion over the sides of his face, which his small hat was unable to conceal. He was dressed in a blue round jacket, a Guernsey striped frock, trousers fitting tight round the hips, and large enough in the legs to accommodate a Jamaica-man with the elephantiasis; then came the long quartered shoes, and enough string to measure the Irish giant.

When Susan came near to Margaret, and she saw the cold scrutinizing look, the kind of indifferent curiosity with which she surveyed her, the girl's face became as red as scarlet, and she hesitated about crossing the threshold. Old Jenkins stepped forward and welcomed her. She threw herself into his arms, and continued crying and hiding her face against the old man's shoulders. She would not untwine her arms; and she kept saying, "Father! father!" Not another word came from her. And although

the scene and the bustle in the cottage might have warned the old dame, had she been even as sensible as affection had believed, yet she sat quite unconcerned ; the wheel continued its rotatory motion, and the eyes were only directed to the work before her.

Stanhope, by way of relieving Susan from her difficulty, had commenced a conversation with the sailor-boy, to which Margaret, who admired his straightforward yet respectful mode of address, joined in questioning the lad ; and he, sailor like, for sailors are very fond of pretty faces, invariably answered the question of Charles to Margaret, holding his hat with both his hands, and twisting it round about, first one way and then the other, as if he were willing to make it as flat in the rim as a skimming-dish.

“ How long have you been at sea, my lad ? ” said Charles in his usual good-tempered manner.

“ Six years,” replied the boy, looking full in Margaret’s face.

“ Six years ! ” replied Margaret. “ Why, how came you to go away so young, John ? ”

“ I ’ll tell you, ma’am, all about it in the twirling of a handspike. I was one evening going into the village, when I met two young lads just about my age now. They asked me the way to a public-house, and I showed them the Plough. I was then going away ; but one of the two said, ‘ No, d——n it, shipmate, (I begs your pardon, ma’am, but those were his words,) you sha’n’t go without having pilotage, so bring yourself to anchor ; and as we are not six upon four now, you may sway away at the provision basket.’ Well, ma’am, we got talking about one thing and the other, when one says to me, ‘ Why, what a gulpin you must be to stick at anchor in this muddy roadstead,’ (to be sure it was a wet day,) when you might see the world and know what it’s made of ! Why don’t you cut and run, bundle down chest and bag, and ship on board one of the outward-bound as a cabin-boy ? I warrant, a sharp fellow like you would not be long handling the skipper’s tea-kettle ; you would soon be one of your light hands aloft, and then, d’ye see, you’d be independent—you’d be in America one day sailing alongside of the

sea-serpent, which nobody but those Yankees ever saw yet ; and the next you'd be sipping rum at Jamaica : then you'd be amongst the *black niggers* in Africa, and seeing them in their birthday suits ;' (I beg your pardon, ma'am, but they never wears no clothes ;) ' and then, after that, you might be picking up gold-dust on the Gold Coast ;' (I thought the whole land was gold ;) ' and, Lord love you, my lad ! only to go up the Straits, and see all the fun and frolic of the different places !—one day to be eating a shark, and the next one to be frying a flying-fish ;' (I shook my head at that, ma'am—*flying-fish* ;) ' No go,' said I. ' Ay, but it is,' said he : ' just you ship yourself along with us ; we are going to the Eastern Indies, and so up to China ; and there, my lad, I'll show you men with two tails, like monkeys, only lashed higher up. Come, fill your glass, my little sailor, and I'll sing you a song,'—and they sang me half a dozen. Well, sir, I was so pleased, that I made up my mind for a start ; and I promised to meet them that day week. One of them gave me a book of songs, and I learnt to sing

one or two, to make the children dance, and mother there used to repeat them. So, when the day comes, I just runs and takes a kiss at she,' (pointing to Susan,) 'for she was my favourite; and I stows away some money, and some traps, and swinging them tied up in a handkerchief to the end of a stick, away I went with a flowing sheet after my companions. I never said a word to father or mother. So, after six years, home I comes, and finds the old ones all alive, having escaped a fire-ship: though to be sure the old house was burnt; but that does not signify—I had got some of the shiners, and 'Here,' says I, as I kissed my father, 'here's the stuff to build houses with;' and I hands over enough for him to sway away upon all top-ropes for the next five years, by which time I'm thinking he'll have to answer Master aloft."

They were stopped in the recital of the young sailor by Susan's loud scream of "Mother!" and instantly the eyes of Stanhope and the sailor were fixed upon the horrid scene. Before the old woman, Susan had thrown herself upon her knees, and had begun in a low tone, so

as to escape the ears of the other party, to call upon her mother. The old man stood by the side of his wife, and had shaken her gently by the shoulder, as if to rouse her from her torpor : the old woman still held the hemp, but the daughter had removed the wheel on one side. Her endeavours to arouse the sleepy forgetfulness of her mother into a recognition led to the increased violence of voice. It was useless : a total oblivion seemed to have at last come over the dame ; which the daughter mistook for a disinclination to pardon, or totally forgive her. “ Mother, mother,” she said, “ look at me,—it is your Susan—your daughter !” and she burst into a dreadful flood of tears, but they ceased instantly when a thought struck the girl that her mother was an idiot ; she approached upon her knees close to her—her eyes were starting from her head—she looked, she gazed intently upon her parent, but not the slightest sign of recognition occurred, although Jenkins leant over her shoulder, and said in a mild soothing voice, “ Dame, dame, ’tis your daughter,” she heard not—she heeded not.

Susan had now placed her finger upon the eyelids of her mother, and she held the eyes open, looking into them with an expression of horror which none can paint; she again called her louder and louder; when, placing both her hands over her own eyes, she gave a tremendous shriek, and fell backward.

Stanhope, overwhelmed with the bitterness of the scene, could hardly succour her; but her brother ran to lift her up, whilst old Jenkins tottered to the table and supported himself against it. Again returning sense came to the daughter—she looked again upon the vacant, cold, idiotic stare of the mother, whose stony sight were better likened to that of a ghost than of the living; there was “no speculation in those eyes, with which she did glare withal”—not a noise was heard—even those who had been accused of unnatural coldness held their breath. Susan once more knelt before her who gave her birth; she seemed in prayer, for her lips moved, although no sound escaped; she grew nearer and nearer, as if to win her by kind and affectionate mildness; she called her

again and again,—’twas useless—no sound responded, no animation came back, as if to recall memory—none ! but, unfortunately, the dame shook her head with that motion which implies a negative. The idea whirled through the brain of Susan ; she merely said, “ Do—oh do ! ” but again the same motion occurred. Susan looked hurriedly around her ; she fixed her eyes upon her father and her brother — she again looked an eager solicitation from her mother ; then jumping on her feet, she ran to the door, and was soon beyond the threshold. Her brother followed her, and brought her back ; but, as she entered the hut, an empty phial fell from her hand. Stanhope instantly seized one of the broken pieces, and smelt it ; — it was arsenic. Immediately he proposed to pour warm water down the wretched creature’s throat. Whilst sense remained, she would have opposed it ; for on hearing the proposition, she threw herself on the bed, hiding her mouth in the pillow. There was no water warm—there was no remedy within their reach ; and as if spell-bound to the place, they awaited the

termination of this horrid tragedy. Shortly Susan became convulsed ; she spoke of the icy coldness which seemed creeping through every vein, and then of floods of fire coursing through her blood ; once she raised herself up, and her brother, whose eyes were swollen in tears, in vain feebly articulated, “ Cheer up—cheer up ! ”

The deadly venom had secured the prey ; a kind of maniac look soon flushed her eyes ; she called loudly on her mother and on her father ; —the one was an idiot, the other struck dumb by the appalling scene. She accused herself of all this horror ; and, oh, too deeply—indelibly—engraven on her mind even for the pangs of death to eradicate, she called upon her seducer—she implored Heaven to grant him days of happiness and nights of ease, and she died exclaiming with outstretched arms, as if to clutch her lover closer to her breast, “ My *Cavendish*—my *Cavendish* ! ! ”

This is no fiction of poetic imagination—this dreadful and appalling scene is drawn from the life, and happened within these realms, within the last two years ;—and if we could

benefit from the examples of the wretched, here, *here* is the scene to awake our slumbering virtue, to recall us from the paths of wickedness, and to make us judge “of the enormity of the crime by the mischief it produces.” There lay upon the bed, once the pride of the parents, whose youth and beauty might have secured wealth and happiness, the dead, cold corpse of Susan—and across it, the anguish-stricken sailor. By the side of the table, with his face buried in his hands, was poor old Jenkins; the dame had resumed her work; and Stanhope, whose tears could not be controlled, led his wife—and she too weeping—to the door. At the very moment, the younger sisters came in, to kiss their returned friend; and as they called her name in childish happiness, the dame broke into her song of,

“ Susan, Susan, lovely dear—”

“ Where the tree falleth, there it must lie,” were the only words which escaped from Stanhope. He lifted his wife upon the horse; they both, as if eager to withdraw from them on whom the hand of Providence had so heavily

fallen, started into a brisk gallop, and felt their hearts lighter as they increased their distance from the wretched.

No sooner did Stanhope arrive at home, than he despatched a messenger to the clergyman, informing him of what he had witnessed; he sent a cart to remove the furniture, and by the able assistance of the sailor, who now found weeping unavailing turned his attention to his parents, the furniture and the living were removed to the new cottage, and the suicide given over to the charge of those who

“ Live upon the dead,
And mimic sorrow when the heart ’s not sad.”

That Stanhope should inquire about this Cavendish was natural; the name recalled scenes he would willingly have for ever struck from his heart. He had forgiven his sister, and he had heard, with much satisfaction, that she made an excellent mother and an affectionate wife: but now, a life sacrificed through the arts of this villain aroused his activity, and although he reasoned,—and, some think, reasoned rightly—that in all affairs of this kind the woman is

more to blame than the man, and that if the female sex rejected with becoming scorn the first advances of those who, they know, can never render them respectable, the misery would rarely occur. He inquired far and near, and soon determined that it was the same Cavendish ; for the time corresponded with his being in England, and the description of the person was the same as that which he had gleaned from Louisa. One man informed him that he would know him anywhere, by a cut across his wrist, which he remarked when the gentleman was playing cricket ; and the sailor said he should know him again in spite of all attempts to disgrace his figure-head. All this amounted to very little — for the bird was flown, and no one had seen him for many months. From Susan little had been gleaned as to where Cavendish had taken her, but she spoke of Dover as if she had been there ; but whenever her father had asked her concerning the man who had taken her away, she grew reserved and cried : and old Jenkins added, that he never knew the name of the man who had seduced his daughter until it came to his ear wafted in her last breath.

Stanhope endeavoured to wean the sailor from his profession, and after various waverings from a resolution never to abandon the sea, the young sailor, being the only one who knew Cavendish by sight of the whole family, consented to become the servant of Stanhope ; and as old Jenkins's cottage was near his master's house, he felt less remorse at leaving his roof. He was shortly afterwards elevated to the dignity of valet-de-place, and was in constant attendance upon Stanhope.

It was about a week after this, that Stanhope received a letter from Douglas ; and the contents determined him as to his immediate application for leave. Margaret little participated in his eagerness, although she could not refuse her consent. The letter was written in apparently low spirits ; at least, not containing that kind of life-like animation which before had been observable in the correspondence of Douglas. But one part—and that which referred to Amelia, and her evident attachment to the son of Sir William Walsingham of Oakside, and moreover the certainty that this was mutual—determined Stanhope to visit Paris as speedily as possible. He ran his

eye over the Red Book, and there saw that the town residence of the baronet was in Cavendish-Square ; and he quietly muttered a malediction against the baronet for living in a place which bore the name of a villain.

The leave was granted, the idleness of Margaret a little removed by the bustle, and four days after the receipt of the letter, and without answering it, Stanhope, brim-full of hope at the good alliance his sister was about to form, was on his journey to town. He alighted at the Arlington Hotel, and told his wife, who seemed quite indifferent even to the bustle of London, that he intended to remain two days, and then proceed to Dover ; giving as his reason the wish to see Louisa, and likewise to obtain an introduction to Sir William Walsingham. He wrote a note to the former, mentioning his arrival and intention of dining with her that day at seven o'clock, and leaving Margaret only the trouble of changing her dress, he sallied forth to Cavendish-square.

The house was closed—as a sailor would say, the dead lights were in—there were no signs of

habitation — no dozing old woman, as Mr. Haynes Bayly says,

“ To peep through the dining-room blinds.”

He rapped, and rung, and after waiting about a quarter of an hour, during which time he repeated the manual exercise, and went through every rap, from the postman's to the five minutes' tirade of a fashionable footman, an elderly woman, muffled up as if fearful of facing a breath of air, just opened enough of the door to see the stranger ; when, perceiving he was a gentleman, she undid the sliding chain, which for prudence' sake she had kept on, and allowed Stanhope to enter the hall.

“ My good woman,” said Stanhope, “ is Sir William Walsingham in town ?”

The good woman evidently neither liked the freedom nor the question — firstly, because she called herself a lady ; and secondly, because the question required an answer, and her short cough was harassing enough, without talking to increase it : so, by way of not provoking the one, and of getting rid of the other, she replied, “ No.”

“ No ?” repeated Stanhope, rather astonished

at the abrupt negative, without the general appendage of 'Sir'; "pray where is he gone?"

"France," replied the old lady; and this produced a cough, and she looked as much as to say, 'That's quite enough for you:' but she was mistaken.

"When did he go?" continued Stanhope.

"Yesterday," replied the woman; and another cough followed.

"Is he going to make any stay there?" asked Stanhope.

"Don't know," was responded.

"How's his son?" continued the inquisitive interrogator.

"Well," was the answer.

"Where is his son, my good woman?"

"France;" and during a fit of coughing which Stanhope thought might introduce him to a coroner's inquest, he departed, being quite satisfied it was all right, and ready to pour the tide of welcome news into the ears of Louisa.

As usual, although Margaret had never stirred out and had nothing in the world to do, she was not ready. She had seated herself at

the window, and had seen one man run over by an omnibus without a start, and had seen a boxing-match without either withdrawing or being excited: she seemed quite overcome by the thick atmosphere of London, and was as torpid as a boa-constrictor after a feast. They managed, therefore, not to arrive until half-past seven; and Stanhope mistook the demure look, the rather distant manner, the taciturn behaviour, to having kept the stock-broker and general speculator from his dinner. Margaret, however, rather liked this silence, as she was too lazy to speak, and cared very little about Louisa, her husband, or her baby. The last poor dear little creature had been dressed up, with very religious care, in all the pomp and vanity of this wicked world, in order to excite a little envy in Stanhope, he being childless: and it is not unfrequent that these little sisterly kindnesses may be observed.

“ Well, Louisa,” said Stanhope, “ here I am on my way to Paris. I wish I could persuade you to come and make one of a lively party: you seem moped to death here.”

“ Charles, you mistake,” replied the evangelical sister : “ I am here perfectly contented, enjoying the society of those Christians who do not spend their time in rioting and wantoning, in living amongst heretics and blasphemers.”

“ Hallo !” said Charles, quite surprised at this volley : “ at any rate, my dear Louisa, you seem to have parted company with your charity ; for why the French should not be just as good as we are, I can’t tell.”

“ Then I can,” resumed his sister. “ How do they spend their Sabbaths ? Are not the shops open for worldly traffic ? Do not the theatres—those places of iniquity, resound with unhallowed music ? Are not balls and routs, and such like un-christian meetings and merriments, improper of the Lord’s Day ? And how, then, can a nation be collectively virtuous, which is individually wicked ?”

“ Pooh, pooh, my dear !” replied Stanhope ; “ it is just as well to amuse oneself innocently, as to sit still and talk scandal, or go to bed because Sunday is so insufferably dull.”

“Innocently!” exclaimed Louisa despondingly: “as if amusement could be innocent *of* a Sunday.”

“Some methodistical fellow has turned your brain, my dear, or you are wilfully blind. Why, in this country, where you would force a man to keep the day as you think right, you see more drunken men and women rolling about the streets, than you would see in Paris in a week. Whereas, if you would cease to make people strait-laced by act of parliament, you would find that their innocent amusements would lead to sobriety and contentment.”

“And what would become of their precious souls?” replied Louisa. “Oh, what would Mr. Cantall say, to hear my brother advocating a system in direct opposition to the Fourth Commandment?—he, who would even prohibit domestic servitude on that day; who dines on cold meat in order that his servants may not work, but go to chapel; and who is so correct on this point, that his servant cleans his shoes on Saturday night, and not even is his bed made on the Sabbath.”

“ Then he is a dirty fellow,” replied Charles, “ for his pains. And as for this Mr. Cantall, who I take to be one of those long slim fellows with their hair plastered flat upon their heads, and their coats hanging dangling about their heels, I have this to say : Whenever a man talks of his honesty, keep your hands in your pockets, for he is going to rob you ; and whenever a man boasts of his sanctity, it is merely a cloak for the multitude of his sins. — But come, let us leave this discourse. Your sister Amelia is, I believe, likely to be married to the eldest and only son of Sir William Walsingham, a man of large property, and certainly a most desirable connexion. My chief business in London was, after I had seen you and Walton, (who looks as grave as a sick monkey, and would warrant the suspicion that the stocks were falling, or the tracts too plentiful,) to proceed direct to Paris—not, as my pious sister would say, to riot and to wanton, but to do my duty towards Amelia,—to see her properly settled in life, and, if I can, to persuade Mr. Honor to cross with me, to give me his friendly aid,

and likewise to arrange a settlement for young Houghton. If, therefore, you feel inclined to be present at your sister's wedding, I would advise you to pack up hastily, and do a proper piece of christianity in regard to her, and the unholy nation, whom of course you will endeavour to reclaim. I think Amelia would like upon such an occasion to be surrounded by her family ; and a better time could never be chosen than when we are to increase it by a new brother."

Walton, who had never opened his lips, and who was sadly perplexed between religion and the Stock-exchange, at last broke his silence.

" I think, my dear," he began, addressing his wife, " we may proceed to Paris after the settling-day. I can carry over the further account ; and on the more serious subject, I think there is no *option* when it becomes a duty. I am ready and willing to go, for I never have seen this modern Babylon ; and I understand they always get the earliest information relative to Cortes Bonds."

Margaret managed by great exertion to get

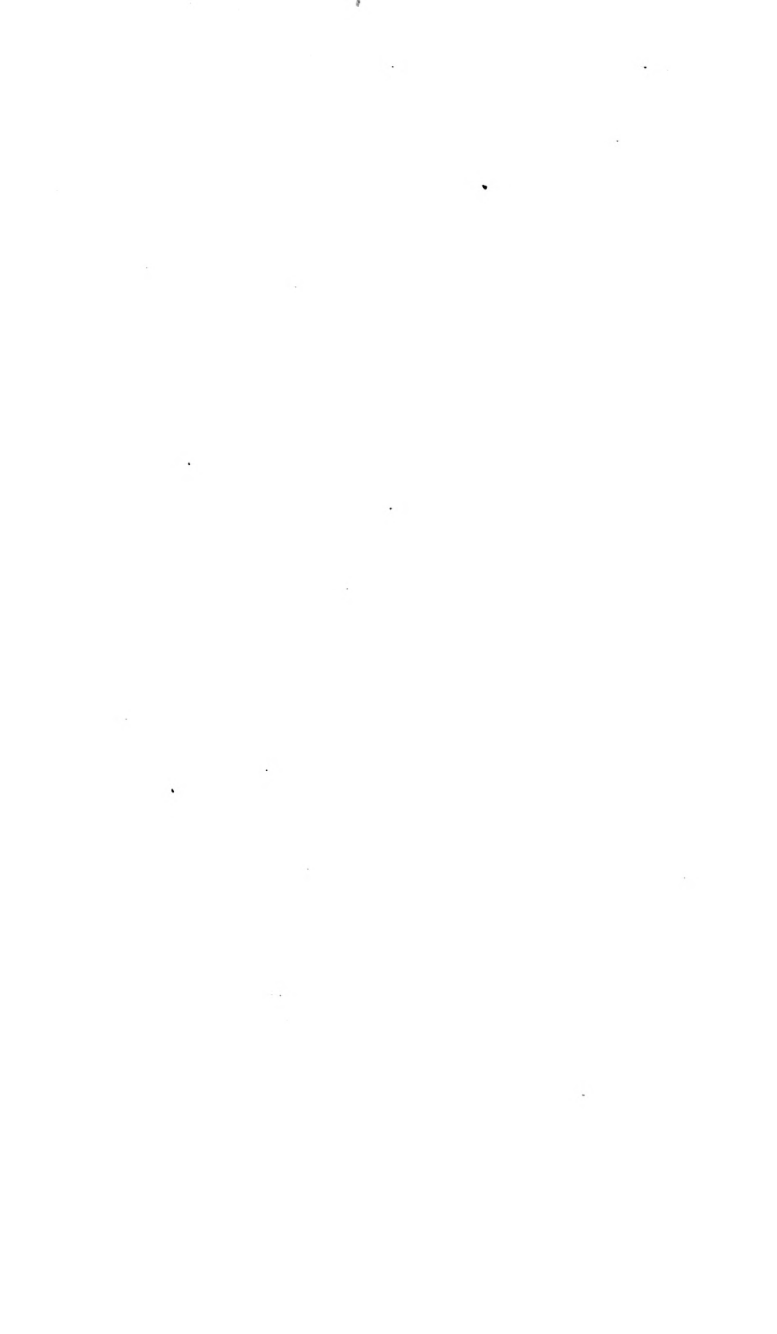
out to Louisa, " Oh, do come." The sedate and sober Louisa wavered much between the inclination and her duty, and before they had parted, it was arranged that the Waltons should follow ; and Stanhope and his wife proceeded to Paris, and arrived there about midnight, at the Hotel des Princes, on the night of the masquerade.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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